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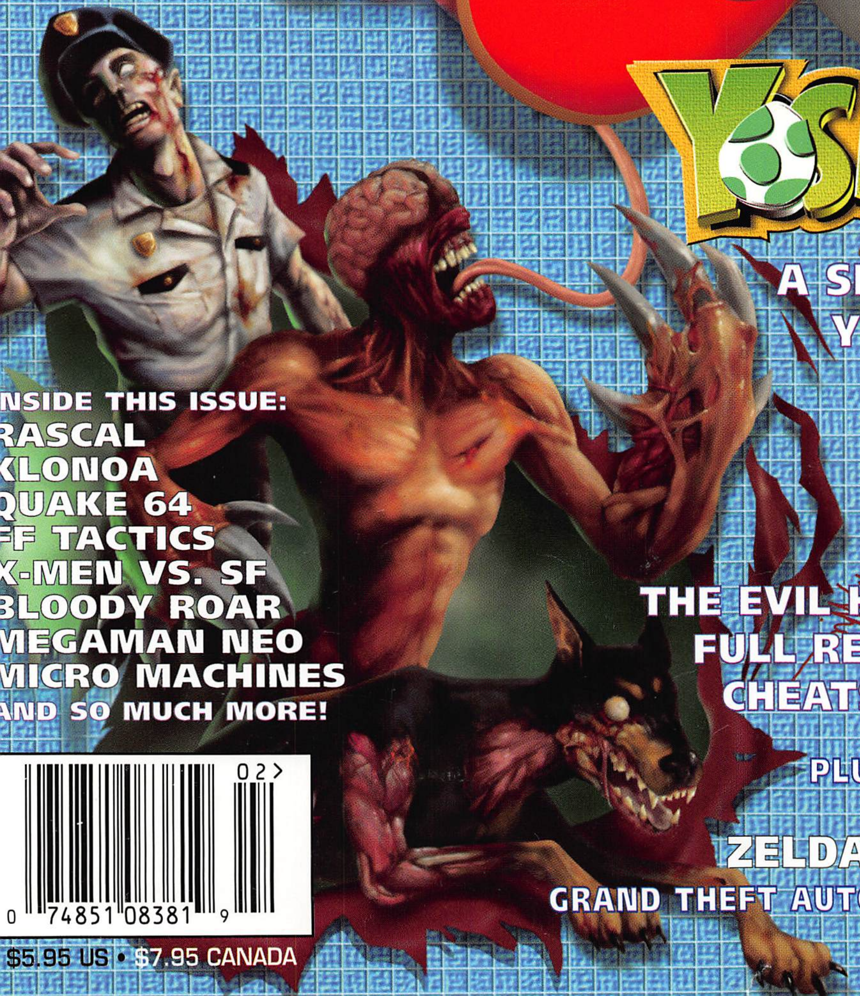
NEXT GENERATION VIDE GAM ZINE

OLUME 6 • ISSUE 2



YOSHI'S STORY

A SIX-PAGE ROMP THROUGH YOSHI'S 64-BIT WORLD!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
RASCAL
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QUAKE 64
FF TACTICS
X-MEN VS. SF
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K-A
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Crash is back. And he's all pumped-up and ready to rumble.

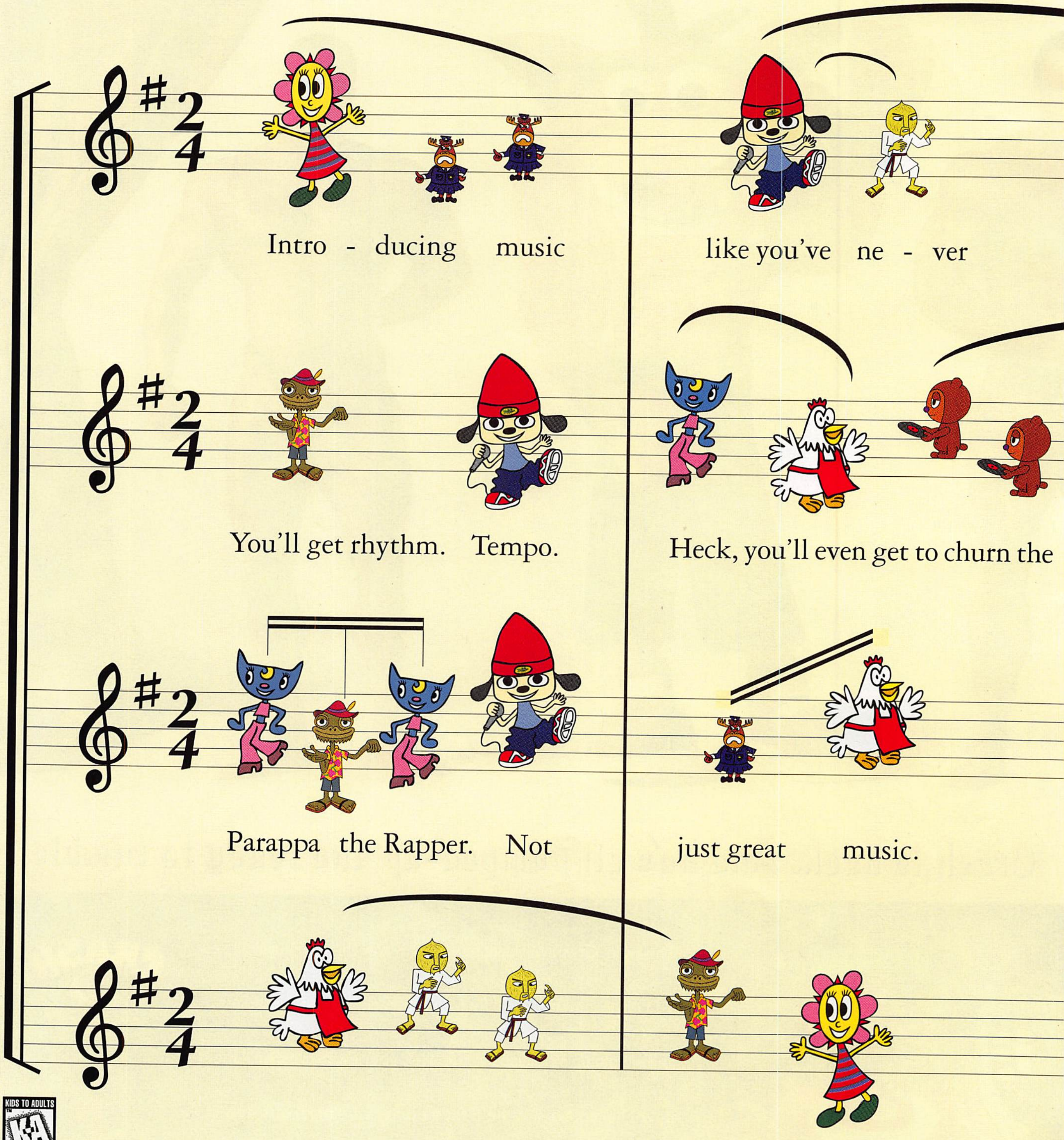


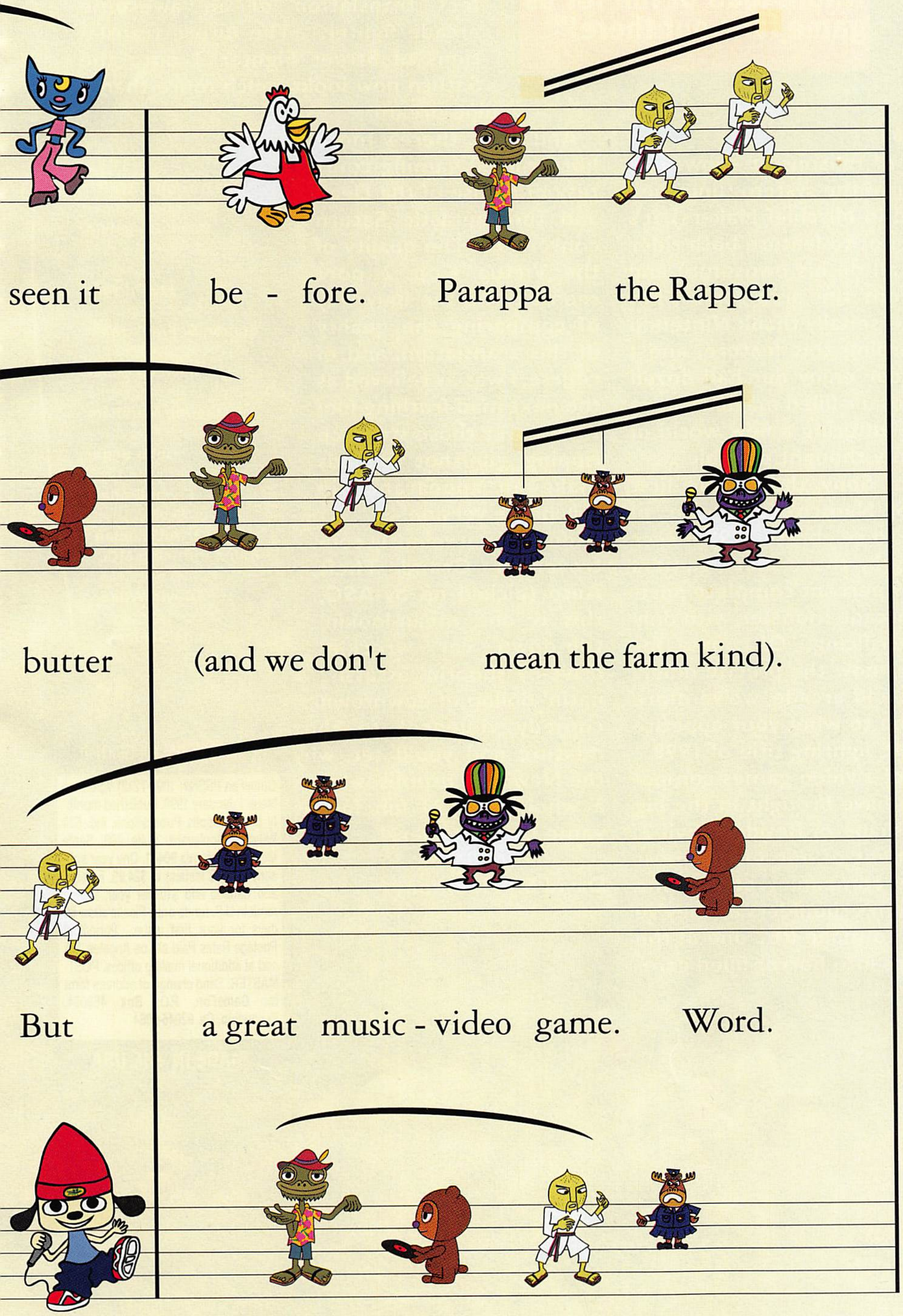
This time, Crash will have to work his way through huge, all new 3-D environments. He'll fly with a jetpack, surf on a jetboard and saddle up a polar bear cub. He's got new moves, he'll meet new characters and he'll face plenty of dangerous new obstacles. It won't take long to realize: Only the strong survive.

CRASH BANDICOOT 2 CORTEX STRIKES BACK

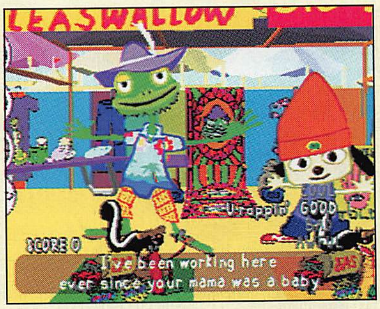
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ISSN# 1092-7212

I'm pleased to announce that GameFan has secured a rather meaty treat for all our loyal readers this month, in the shape of a cute dinosaur first seen in the company of a Brooklyn plumber. Yoshi's Story is a vitally important Nintendo 64 release for a number of reasons; it showcases the immense 2D power of the system (unlocked but never fully realized in Mischief Makers), it's the first Nintendo title not to feature both rider and mount (li'l Yoshi's all on his ownsome) and it's another release from the arch-genius, Mr. Miyamoto. I'd like to personally thank Nintendo for all their help regarding this feature, and I hope that you, the reader, enjoy our half dozen pages of cloud- and dinosaur-filled magic. Ladies and gentlemen, we are entering a new world of cuteness never previously thought possible...

"With Yoshi's Story... Resident Evil 2... X-Men Vs. Street Fighter, PS Tekken 3 and House of the Dead... the New Year promises to be a whole load of fun for us game fans out there!"

Over in the camp of Sony, there's the first exciting screenshots of Namco's port-over of Tekken 3, a fine reason to celebrate 1998 if ever there was one! Judging by those shots, gamers can look forward to a 99 percent complete port-over of the System 12 arcade monster, with only minimum polygonal sacrificing. Of course, for those really wanting to know the precise differences between console and arcade, we've more than enough information to whet your appetite for what looks to be THE fighting title of 1998.

From one behemoth of a video games company to another; Capcom have brought in the big guns in the shambling shape of Resident Evil 2. This crown of achievement of one of the most successful video games companies of all time rests very well on Capcom's shoulders as they've pulled out all the stops to make RE2 one of the most atmospheric romps into horror-filled gaming you've ever witnessed.

Sega have a lot to shout about with the final arrival (and subsequent U.S. announcement) of X-Men Vs. Street Fighter; again thanks to the programming marvels (hideous pun intended) over at Capcom. A mammoth number of 2D animations have been seamlessly blended into a perfect translation of an awesome arcade fighter. The future translations of Street Fighter 3 onto the Saturn now looks much more than a pipe-dream.

And then, there's more horror-filled gaming courtesy of House of the Dead and the fantastic Saturn conversion. The quality of the Virtua Cop 2 port seems to be the only way of comparing the quality of this translation, and of course, I was as relieved as the next mad frothing fool to discover those stomach ripping gun-shot wounds make an appearance in this home version!

Add the marvelously controversial Grand Theft Auto (picked up by ASC, this is one mean-lookin' top-down car wreckin' drive-by shootin' assassinatin' dollop of downtown comedy violence) to the mixture and you'll see why the New Year promises to be a whole load of fun for us game fans out there!

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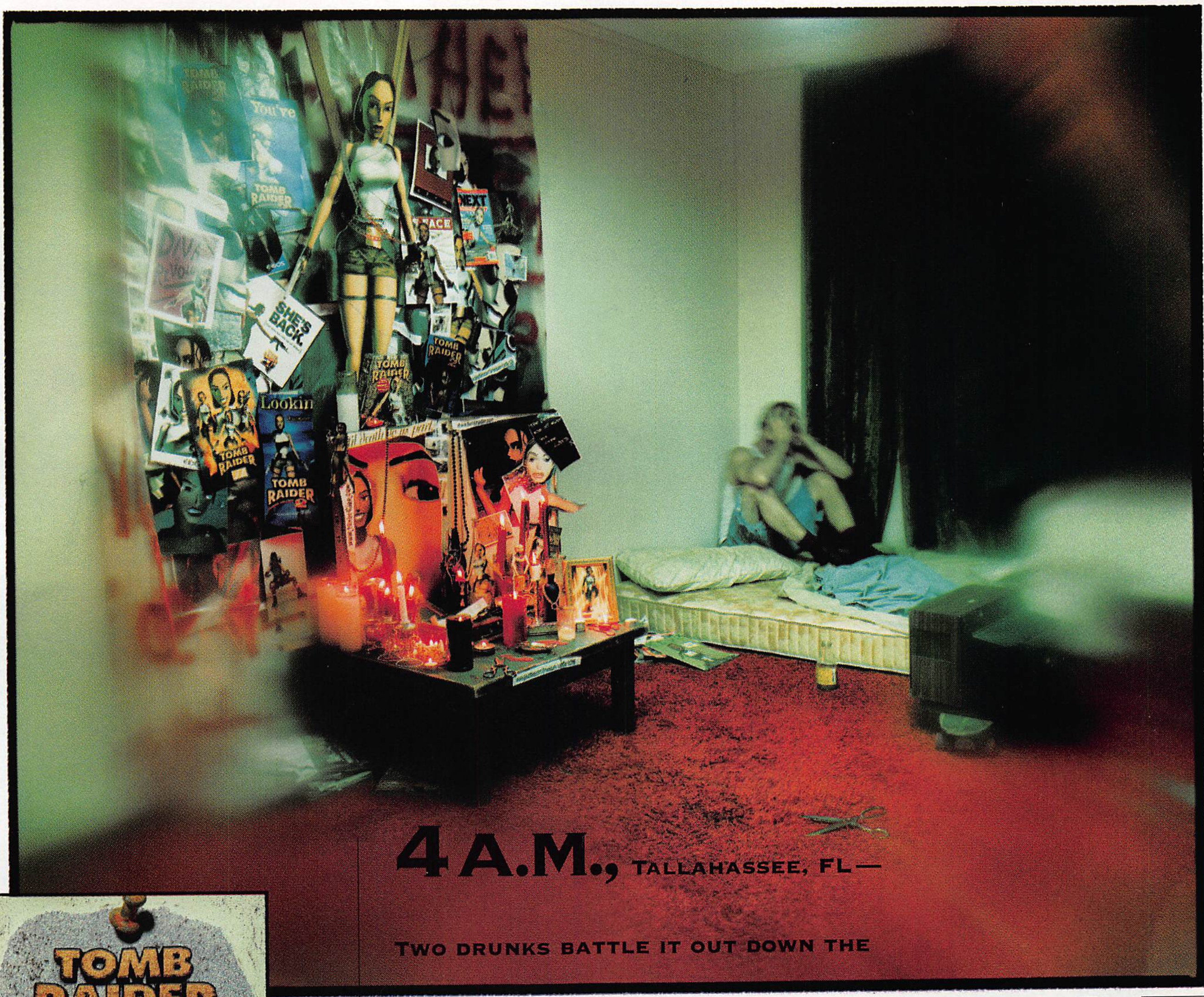
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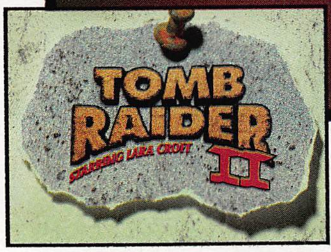
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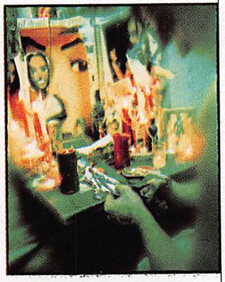




4 A.M., TALLAHASSEE, FL—

TWO DRUNKS BATTLE IT OUT DOWN THE HALL. THE 38 EXPRESS SQUEALS TO A HALT EVERY HALF HOUR ON THE STREET BELOW. SLEEP DOESN'T COME EASY IN ROOM 23. BUT FOR 19 YEAR-OLD RAY COOPER, IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE NOISE. AS HE SAYS, "IT'S BECAUSE EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYES, ALL I SEE IS LARA CROFT."





inset photos

Top: The Second Coming, slated for this fall. **Bottom:** Preparing for her return.

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How to start the mother of all wars

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To start "The War of the Lions," you must use bold strokes. Regicides, double-crosses, violations of queens, good options all. Whatever your plan, once begun, a war of this magnitude is not to be trifled with. This is a brutal conflict of epic proportions, where each hallowed victory brings you closer to the very heart of darkness. Battle after battle, you will command your fighting party across magical lands protected by hostile forces. You will need the help of the bravest warriors, as well as armor, weapons, intricate battle plans and magical spells. Be ruthless. Be clever. Or be dead.

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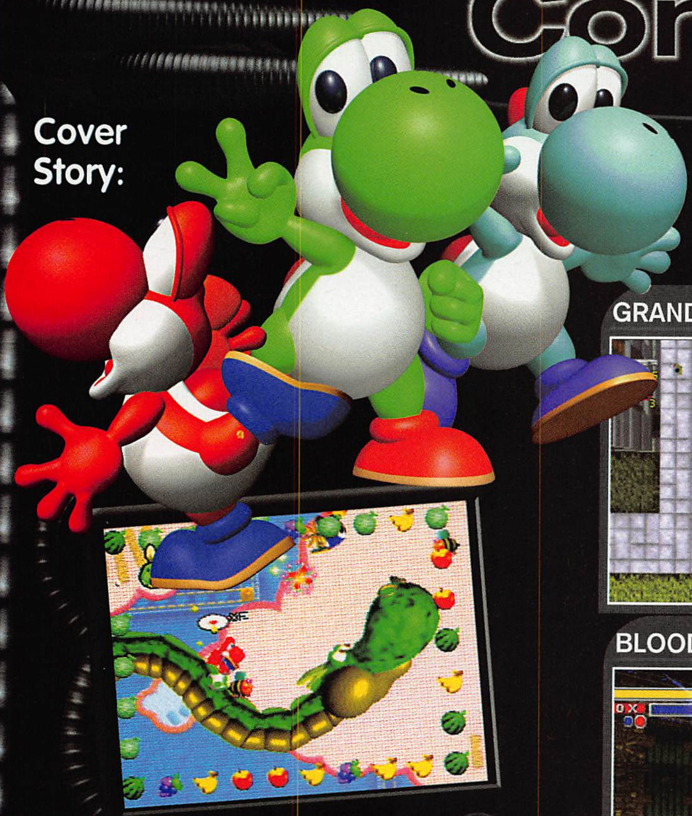
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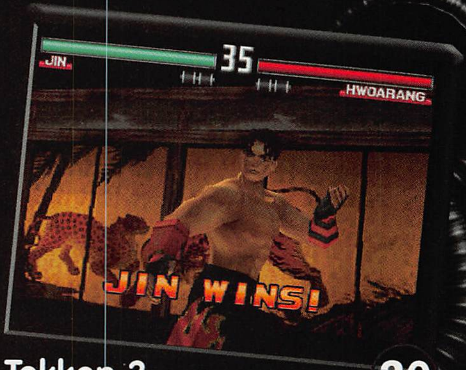
FINAL FANTASY TACTICS™

Contents

Cover Story:



Yoshi's 2D heaven! 62



Tekken 3 30

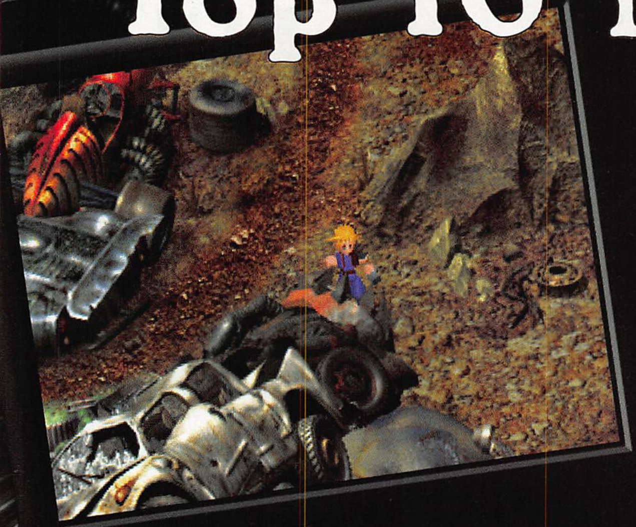

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Top 10 Most Wanted



1 **Final Fantasy VII** PS
READERS' TOP TEN

FOR THE WEEK ENDING 9/30/97

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
3. *Diddy Kong Racing* - N64
4. *Goldeneye* - N64
5. *Crash Bandicoot 2* - PS
6. *Castlenania: SOTN*- PS
7. *Street Fighter EX + Alpha* - PS
8. *Star Fox* - N64
9. *Tekken 3* - Arcade
10. *Mario Kart 64* - N64

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
2. *Metal Gear Solid* - PS
3. *Zelda TOOT* - N64
4. *Tekken 3* - PS
5. *Yoshi's Story* - N64



6. *F-Zero* - N64
7. *X-Men vs. SF* - SS
8. *Goemon 64* - N64
9. *Banjo Kazooie* - N64
10. *Grandia* - SS

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN



1. *Goldeneye* - N64
2. *Mass Destruction* - SS
3. *Jet Moto 2*- PS
4. *Cool Boarders 2* - PS
5. *Crash 2* - PS
6. *Grand Theft Auto* - PS
7. *One* - PS
8. *Yoshi's Story* - N64
9. *NFS* : V-Rally - PS
10. *Sonic R* - SS



1. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
2. *Tekken 3* - PS
3. *Yoshi's Story* - N64
4. *Grand Theft Auto* - PS
5. *Goldeneye* - N64
6. *Micro Machines* - PS
7. *X-Men Vs. SF* - SS (Import)
8. *Einhander* - PS
9. *Quake 2* - PC
10. *One* - PS



1. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
2. *Yoshi's Story* - N64
3. *X-Men vs SF* - SS (Import)
4. *Micro Machines* - PS
5. *Panzer Saga* - SS
6. *One.* - PS
7. *Quake 2* - PC
8. *Burning Rangers* - SS
9. *Rockman Dash* - PS (Import)
10. *Space Hulk* - SS



1. *Tempest*
2. *Defender*
3. *Spy Hunter*
4. *Pengo*
5. *Space Harrier*
6. *Gyruss*
7. *Missile Command*
8. *Time Pilot*
9. *Asteroids*
10. *Chuckie Egg*



1. *Thunder Force 5* - SS
2. *One* - PS
3. *Battle Garegga* - SS (Import)
4. *Shining Force 3* - SS (Import)
5. *Shienryu* - SS (Import)
6. *FF Tactics* - PS
7. *Goldeneye* - N64
8. *Dynamite Headdy* - Genesis
9. *Einhander* - PS (Import)
10. *Klonoa* - PS (Import)



1. *Rockman Dash* - PS (Import)
2. *Yoshi's Story* - N64 (Import)
3. *Einhander* - PS (Import)
4. *X-Men vs SF* - SS (Import)
5. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
6. *Klonoa* - PS (Import)
7. *Grandia* - SS (Import)
8. *Panzer Saga* - SS
9. *Bomberman 64* - N64
10. *Touring Car* - SS

WIN

THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize: Pocket GameBoy

Second Prize: Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize: A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

Congratulations to last month's winners:

First Prize:	Second Prize:	Third Prize:
Bernie Stabbator, Misery, MS	Rich Leadbetter, London, UK	Keith Sweat, New York, NY

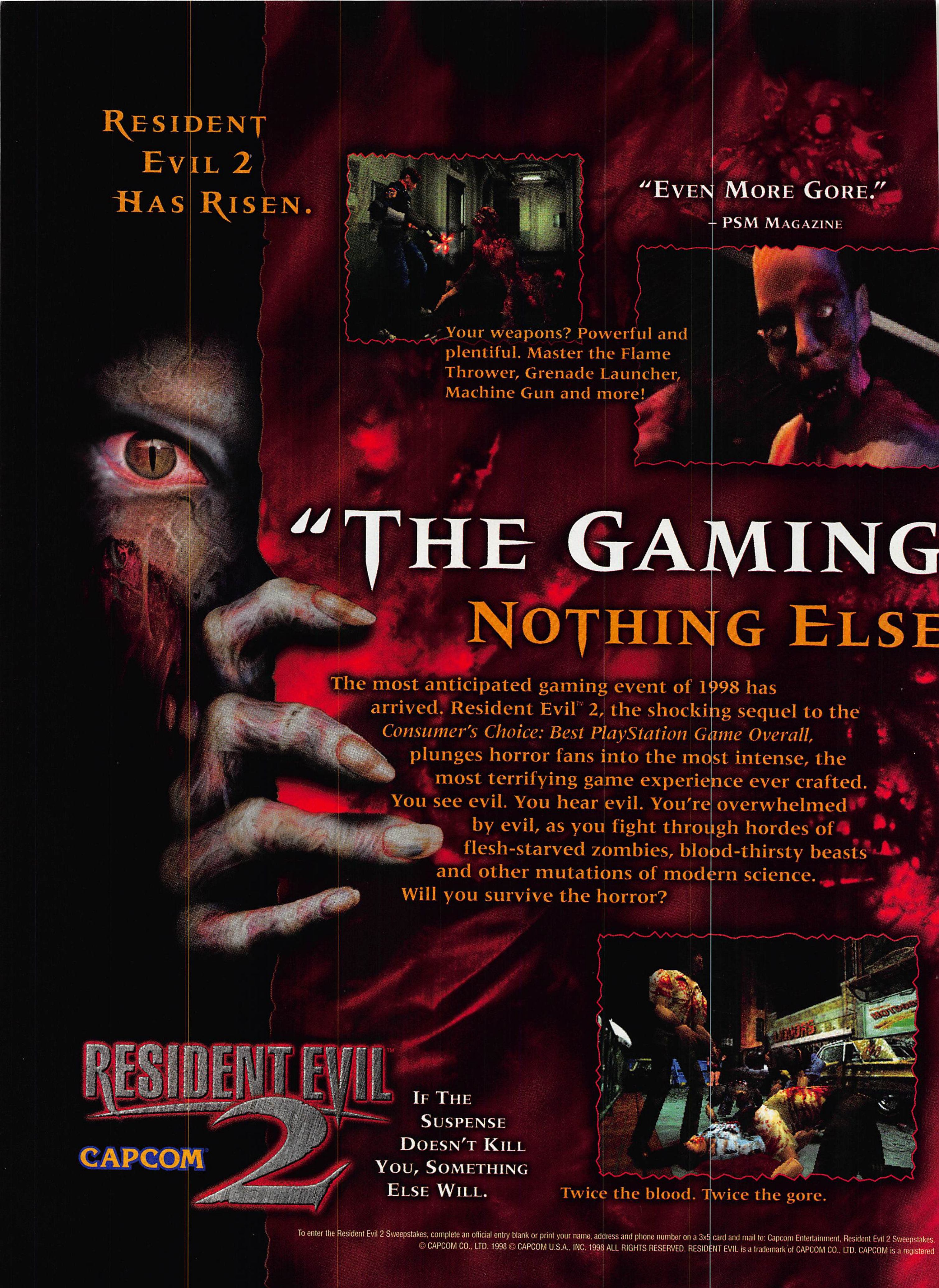
Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

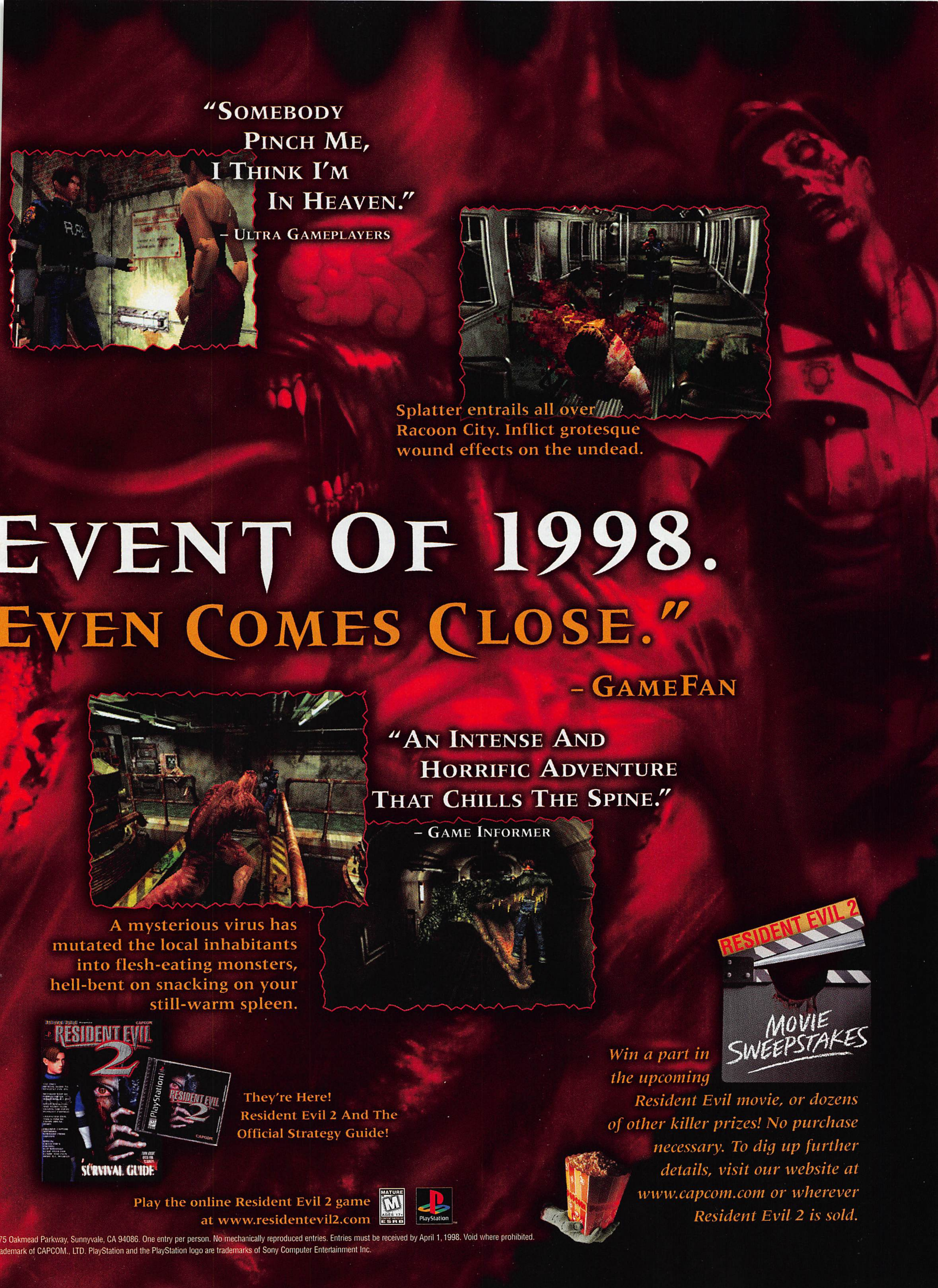
This Month's Guest:
Alan Belardinelli, Bilingual Super Agent Nintendo of America

1. *Wizardry* - NES
2. *Metal Gear* - NES
3. *The Legend of Zelda*- NES
4. *Firepower 2000* - SNES
5. *Zelda: A Link to the Past* - SNES
6. *Wicked 18* - SNES
7. *Starfox 64* - N64
8. *Diddy Kong Racing* - N64
9. *Goldeneye* - N64
10. *Top Gear Rally* - N64





Resident Evil 2 Has Risen.
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Nothing Else
The most anticipated gaming event of 1998 has arrived. Resident Evil™ 2, the shocking sequel to the Consumer's Choice: Best PlayStation Game Overall, plunges horror fans into the most intense, the most terrifying game experience ever crafted. You see evil. You hear evil. You're overwhelmed by evil, as you fight through hordes of flesh-starved zombies, blood-thirsty beasts and other mutations of modern science. Will you survive the horror?
Resident Evil 2
Capcom
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– GAMEFAN
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– GAME INFORMER
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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



E. STORM REUBUS KNIGHTMARE ECM HAMBLETON GLITCH SHIDOSHI SUBSTANCE D SHIN ROX STATION DAVE



Resident Evil 2
GAME OF THE MONTH!



Final Fantasy Tactics
PlayStation
SCEA
RPG

The greatest strategy RPG ever? Not quite, but darn close. Featuring a storyline that would make Tolstoy proud, Square has crafted a sure-fire winner in the FF tradition. 60 FPS visuals and music (PCM amazingly) that simply destroys all previous PS RPGs. This all goes to show that Square possesses powers from above (that or they simply have deep enough pockets to snap up the best talent around—"What am I bid on Quest...?"). In any event, this is a must-have PS title, and I found it far and away superior to Square's previous effort...what was the name of that one again?

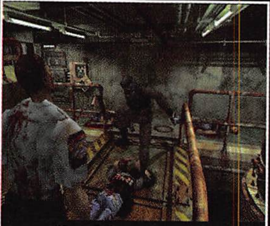
G 9 · C 8 · P 9 · M 10 · O 7 — **94**

This great strategy RPG takes itself way too seriously! The plot is super-intricate, and the dialogue is beyond dramatic. Many religious issues and social pontifications are discussed in FF Tactics' ultra-convoluted plotline. And you keep track of every gripping moment, actually replaying the real-time story breaks with save points, just in case the plot gets too thick (it will!) for ya'. Ha! Anyway, the game looks really sweet (60 fps), sounds magnificent, and the menu system is perfect. It's unfortunate that you can't have very many party members in battle, but this doesn't distract from the excellent play-mechanics and intelligent map design. Not the best in the genre, but a close third behind Vandal Hearts and Shining Force 3.

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 9 · O 7 — **85**

A marvellous counterpoint to the sublime Final Fantasy VII, Tactics manages to convincingly portray a hugely in-depth and rich fantasy world (perhaps not huge enough) whilst at the same time delivering hideous amounts of plotline, strategy and really cool isometic fighting with pretty colors! Square have gone to town and brought back Spartak the spell effect creator with them as the actual summoning spells are some of the most impressive in video game land. Just a shame you have to tediously power up your fighting folk for HOURS to get to the juicy secrets...

G 9 · C 8 · P 9 · M 9 · O 8 — **88**



Resident Evil 2
PlayStation
Capcom
Action/Adventure

More gore than ever before, bigger beasties, more convincing environments, more controllable characters, truly outstanding CG and mutating polygons deviants combine in perhpas the most polished PlayStation product of the 90s. Great voice acting, unbelievable tension, marvellous zombie shuffling and the most inhuman of demonic writhing await every single PlayStation owner in the land. An utterly absorbing trek into terror, with huge replay value (despite the ease of completion) and a couple of hidden surprises for those willing to play the game over and over again. Your quest may be over in three hours, but the remix versions and differently placed items and sub-games mean you never know what's come around the next corner!

G 10 · C 9 · P 9 · M 10 · O 9 — **97**

It's coming! Bolt the doors, hammer large pieces of wood against the windows, and prepare yourself for a terrifying masterpiece of Action/Horror. Not only is Resident Evil 2 a brilliant technical achievement (the graphics engine and audio far surpass the original), but it is also one of the finest video game productions that I have ever experienced. From the stupefying CG and real-time cut-scenes to the intense gameplay and mind-jarring mutative bosses; Resident Evil 2 is a continual passage of extreme horror. The violence is gratuitous, the story is deep, and the 2CD system (one disk per character) is an innovation that has never been seen before. The only thing missing is a fresh pair of underwear (a coupon would suffice). The wait was well worth it.

G 10 · C 9 · P 9 · M 10 · O 10 — **98**

After many delays the sequel to one of the best PlayStation games in recent memory finally hits home - and it's every bit as good as we had hoped! More creatures, more action, more weapons, more scares, more gore and more game (2 CDs, and two quests for each main character) make RE2 a great way to kick off the new year. My only 'slight' complaint is that RE2 seems a lot easier than it's predecessor. But you'll be having so much fun decapitating zombies and running from hulking bio-genetic mutations that you'll hardly notice. Capcom have done it again. RE2 is a masterpiece!

G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 8 — **96**



Riven
PlayStation
Acclaim
Puzzle/Mystery

You probably have some idea where this one is going to go even without knowing it. Yes, the puzzles are actually somewhat logic-based this time; the graphics are better, with a lot more rendered CG excitement; and the music is pretty OK too. But, well, this just isn't my type of game. Too slow, and much too boring for me, it just never got going like it could have. This is all to be expected as Cyan isn't going to mess with a game that sold over 5 million copies, are they (I had hoped that maybe a little more innovation was in the offing, <sigh>)? I hate to say it, but if you liked the first one you'll love this one. If not, go buy something else; anything else.

G 10 · C n/a · P 5 · M 8 · O 5 — **65**

How long is too long to wait for a sequel? Well, after just over 4 years Riven is finally here (Myst was released in September of '93 for the Macintosh)! I must confess that I thoroughly enjoyed Myst, and I was really looking forward to this sequel; however, I expected much more after such a long wait. Don't get me wrong, Riven is a beautiful and deeply engrossing experience, but it just doesn't differ from the original as much as I had hoped (other than the fact that the puzzles are much more complex). If you liked Myst, this game will definitely please and surely challenge; otherwise, give it a rent before you buy.

G 10 · C n/a · P n/a · M 10 · O 5 — **82**

I must admit, I originally viewed Riven in much the same way as I viewed Myst - a great 'starting point' for non-gamers who don't like playing under any kind of time limit or threat of death. But the more I played it, the more I became drawn in to this strange and wonderful world. The photo realistic graphics and excellent audio create (with a little bit of imagination) a cohesive and believable other universe that is filled with creative puzzles (much more logical than Myst). Definitely not for everyone, but if you think you can stand the relaxed pace, a worthwhile venture.

G 8 · C n/a · P 8 · M 9 · O 9 — **85**



Micro Machines V3
PlayStation
Midway
Racing

It's nice to see that someone had enough intelligence to pick up Codemaster's finest hour, especially when it's the last company you'd expect. Midway delivers MM V3 just in time to save some shred of their reputation after the abomination that was MK Mythologies—in fact, this seems like it may mark a turnaround of sorts from the usually quality-deficient company. MM V3 is a phenomenal multi-player game (8 at once!) and deserves to have accolades rained on it from all quarters for this virtue alone. The one-player contest is OK, and if you don't have any friends it's interesting, but that's not what you want this one for. It looks as if Bomberman and Poy Poy (along with Goldeneye deathmatch, of course) have some legitimate competition. More please, Midway.

G 7 · C 8 · P 9 · M 5 · O 9 — **92**

Being a Brit., Micro Machines has special meaning to me. I grew up with this game in England, and I'm glad to see the latest (and by all means best) version get picked up by Midway for an American release. The concept may be simple, but MM is pure addiction. In my opinion it is one of the greatest, most entertaining multi-player console games ever devised. This version throws some stunning 60fps 3D graphics into the mix, along with the usual assortment of tracks, vehicles and tripped out characters. If you have a multi-tap, do yourself a favor and get Micro Machines.

G 8 · C 10 · P 10 · M 7 · O 8 — **95**

I heartily agree with my fellow comrades-in-arms; this 32-bit version of Micro Machines provides unparalleled entertainment both in single and multi-player; single-handedly turning the PlayStation into a socially acceptable gaming system. What makes the game even more special (aside from the fact that you're controlling extremely cool vehicles in outrageously fun arenas) is the sheer playability of the title; there's trucks, cars, and even speedboats to control! Hats off to Midway for snapping up this Euro-hit, and why don't you grab a copy and a multi-tap while you can... this one's gonna be big!

G 8 · C 9 · P 10 · M 8 · O 9 — **94**



Klonoa
PlayStation
Namco
Action/Platform

3D certainly lends itself well to Namco's 60fps critter based platform extravaganza. After folding your reality back into place, post Namco's now ludicrous CG skills, you will find a game formula comprised of intricate play mechanics and playability along with the best the polygonal world has to offer. Klonoa is your 16-bit memories laid onto a 3D landscape. Exactly what I've been searching for. Emerge from the corridors and get back into gaming, now's the time!

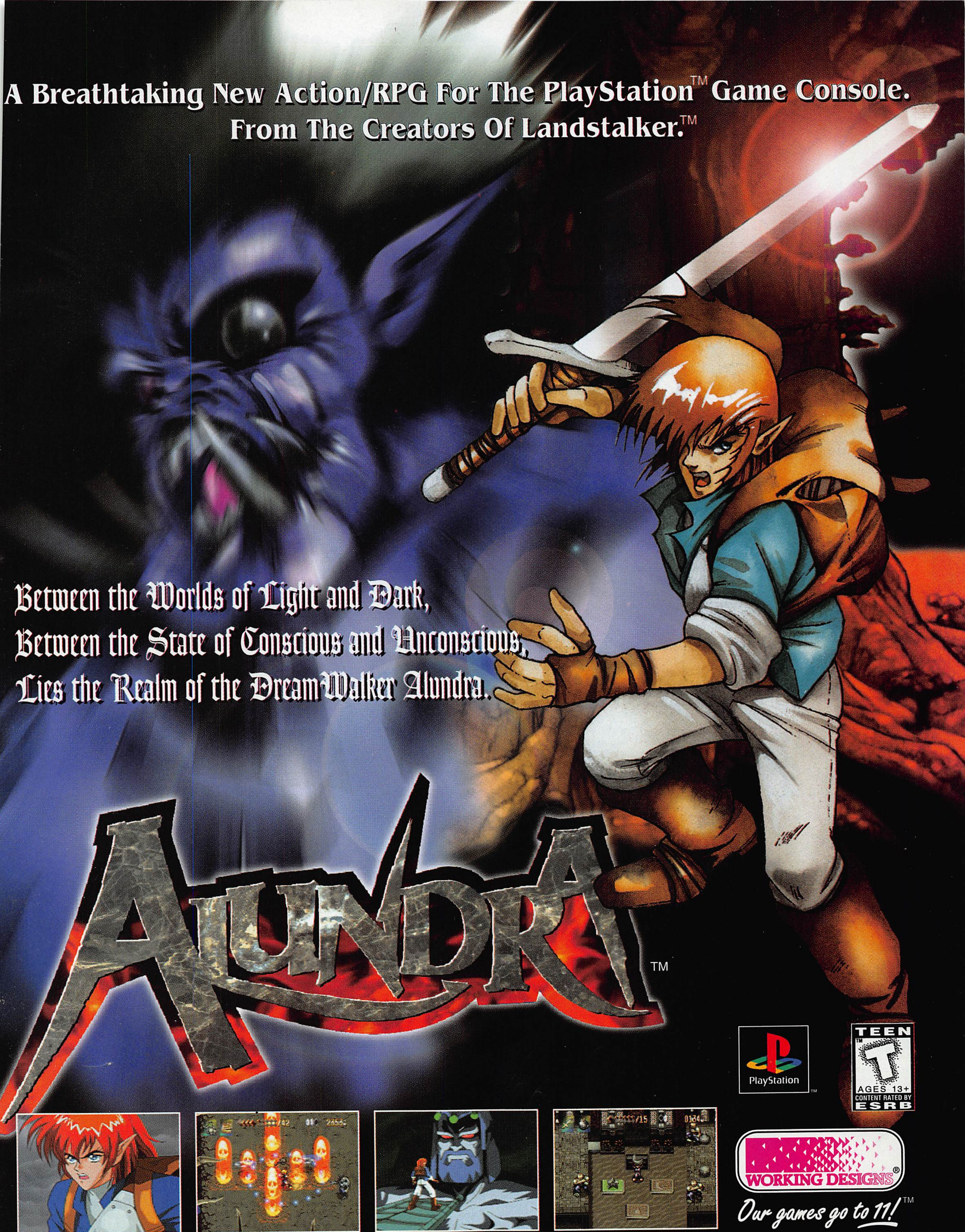
G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 8 — **93**

Old school 2D mechanics augmented with crisp, beautiful 3D graphics and some magical tunes make Klonoa a delightful platformer that is guaranteed to put a smile on even the most jaded gamers face. It's not particularly long, nor particularly tough, but the experience is a such an enjoyable one that you're not liable to care. If you're looking for blood and guts, look elsewhere. If you're looking for charm, backed up by solid gameplay, then Klonoa's for you.

G 8 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 7 — **90**

Knightmare and I have decided that the term "delightful" actually works for Klonoa. I mean, just look at him!Check-out those funky, colorful landscapes! Stare at that ludicrous CG! Swim in those happy tunes! Klonoa's presentation is incredible. 60 frames per second looks AWESOME in a side-scroller. Mad A/V aside, the gameplay is also very close to perfection. The grabbing play-mechanic is cool, I think it's been incorporated into the gameplay well, and the control is tight. Perhaps what's most important here is the dream-like atmosphere that Klonoa is blessed with. You see, just like Nights, Klonoa's gameplay is accepted as being near-perfect. And after you come to this realization, the only thing left is complete immersion.

G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 8 — **93**


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Einhander
PlayStation
Namco
Shooter

What a great year it's been for shooting! Thunder Force V and RayStorm come immediately to mind, but you'll quickly forget them both just minutes into Einhander, easily the most spectacular shooter of the decade. I don't know who these Square guys are but they're ruining it for everyone else. Einhander's so epic in its presentation it immediately sucks you into its Neo-Tokyo guise and never lets go. The polygon and camera work is scary and the bosses will destroy your remaining brain cells. The non-break format links it all together. Spec-freakin'-tacular!! I love Square!!

G 10 | C 10 | P 9 | M 9 | O 8 | **98**

I really resent the way Square just decide one day that they're going to 'do' a certain type of game and then, with no prior experience, just knock out one of the most impressive examples of the genre ever. Einhander rocks! Jaw dropping streamed backgrounds, cool polygon ships, excellent music, and most importantly, tight, satisfying gameplay. The rotating weapons system works really well and the action is both frantic and balanced. A must for all serious shooter fans.

G 10 | C 9 | P 9 | M 9 | O 6 | **93**

Square proves that they can do more than just make some pretty sparkly RPG's as Einhander is the single most graphically intense shooter ever conceived and is far and away the most playable shooter on PS yet (until G-Darius makes an appearance). Fantastically smooth and well-lit graphics along with NO breakup lend to the psychotic nature of this beast—even the music is awe inspiring. The gameplay doesn't quite live up to the aural and graphical assault but it's still the best it gets on Sony's wunderkind. Shooter junkies rejoice! Go buy this now, as there is no word on a domestic release (Tobal 2 syndrome strikes again? NOOOOOO!).

G 10 | C 8 | P 8 | M 9 | O 9 | **93**



WCW Monday Nitro
PlayStation
TH•Q
Wrestling

Hey, I don't know squat about rassling. Sure, I'll flip past the spectacle now again as I graze the tube and chuckle a bit at the sight of grown men in their drawers throwing each other about. But it soon makes me feel icky so I change the channel. Anyhoo, here we have what is sure to be popular rassling game from THQ which attempts to capture the true flavor of a night at a tumble fest. Initially, the graphics impress with fairly good looking and big characters rassling it out in the 3D arenas. Get your hands on the controls for just a few seconds however and any positive feelings that you might have had towards the game evaporate faster than the sweat off of Hulk Hogan's back. The control is god-awful slow and unresponsive, sapping any and all potential fun from the proceedings. Rassling fans who want a good licensed game should stick with, uh, let's see...oh yeah, I have no idea. A lot of characters, though.

G 6 | C 5 | P 5 | M 6 | O 6 | **66**

Don't even get me started. Grrr. The combination of pretty graphics and bad gameplay gets me right in the heart. Why does this still happen, and why is it so irrelevant when it comes to sales? Really, I have to take a stand. Even if you're not a gamer, and you're just buying Nitro 'cause you dig the league, there's no way you can tell me that it plays well! Forget about it! WCW Nitro: The best way to play licensed WCW stars on your PS, and contrastly the best way to enjoy (!) poor control in a wrestling game. Am I recommending this game, then, to a certain percentage of our readers? Hell no!

G 8 | C 3 | P 3 | M 6 | O 6 | **45**

If you're looking for a game that captures the look, the feel, the atmosphere of WCW's Monday Nitro, here you go. The problem lies when we get to the "wrestling" part. This really isn't a wrestling game, at least as far as I've become accustomed to; this is more of a fighting game with Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage. It's clear that an attempt at a good game was made, especially finally seeing managers and run-ins by other wrestlers, but the play mechanics are just ridiculous. It's sad that America sees this as an example of the wrestling genre, and not games like Firepro 6-man Scramble.

G 7 | C 4 | P 4 | M 7 | O 6 | **61**



Sonic R
Saturn
Sega
Action/Racing

Initially I was kind of sad about Sonic R. "Finally a 3D Sonic game and it's a friggin' racing game!?" I moaned. But Travellers Tale (God they're good) have done the game so right, from the perfect balance to the vast amount of hidden goodness and I'm-so happy-I-could-burst Sega tunes, that now I'm quite sold on the idea. The new fade-in pop-up cure works phenomenally well and graphically the whole game's a thing of beauty. Still, no new exclusive Saturn Sonic ever... a sad, sad state of affairs. Maybe the next time around.

G 9 | C 8 | P 8 | M 8 | O 8 | **90**

Yes, I like the music. I'm one of the few, it seems. I also happen to really like the game. Travellers Tales hav produced a fantastic Sonic (for indeed, it feels like one) title with all the right details. The characters look great, and they each act and control exactly as I would have wished them to in a 3D racing environment. Analog pad control is perfect, and I love using the L and R for sharp turning. It's all very addictive, because it feels so much like you're controlling these great Sonic characters in 3D platforming environments, except at break-neck speeds. I guess the unbelievable, N64-quality graphics would have someting to do with this. Give me a sequel on Sega's new machine, by the same team, and I'll die.

G 10 | C 9 | P 9 | M 9 | O 9 | **92**

First things first: This isn't exactly what I was looking for when it came to a 3D Sonic game. which is something I'm sure you've heard about a millions times by now. However, for what it is (a solid racer) it's quite good. Not being a tremendous fan of the genre (Diddy and Mario Kart included) I was still pleasantly surprised by the play and graphics exhibited herein—Traveler's Tales strikes again. The vocals need to go, although this game is NOWHERE near as bad as a certain 'imaginative' website may have you believe (Did you guys even play it?! The magic 8-Ball says 'NO'). A solid racer that isn't going to set the world on fire, but a good game for starving Saturn fans—and most are looking pretty malnourished at this point...

G 8 | C 8 | P 8 | M 6 | O 7 | **85**



Sega Touring Car
Saturn
Sega
Racing

When I first saw Touring Car running I laughed out loud. The stuttering frame rate and warping polygons looked worse than even Daytona CE! But, as with all AM games, the beauty is in the gameplay. Play for a few hours and you begin to understand the amount of work that has gone into making the cars look and handle as realistically as possible. The clipping distance is excellent, and the sense of speed generated is second to none. Once again, you've just got to look beyond the surface.

G 6 | C 8 | P 9 | M 9 | O 7 | **82**

The frame rate is a little suspect, but other than that this game is as good as Sega racers get. After adjusting to the oddly jumpy frame rate this game becomes a true joy to play. Super fast and phenomenally playable, this title proves that AM Annex has as much Saturn ability as Model 2 and delivers a very close rendition of the much underrated arcade game. Just make sure that you have an analog pad handy—playing this game with a regular pad can lead to bouts of controller flinging rage. A hot soundtrack rounds out the experience, and makes a fitting farewell for Sega racers on Saturn.

G 7 | C 9 | P 9 | M 9 | O 7 | **90**

Chances are, you'll dislike this game the first few times you play it. This was certainly the case with many editors here (myself included). The initially jarring, constantly shifting frame rate really seemed to hamper the game. Given several play sessions however, it became apparent that A)-the frame rate anamoly did not seem to affect control in any real sense, and that B)-the frame rate anamoly turns out to be an acceptable trade off for Touring Car's expansive view and incredible speed, the factor of which provides the very essence of this game's fun. So yes, as with nearly every other Sega racer new and old, there is satisfying, addictive gameplay to be had here. Give TC more than a cursory glance and you'll probably come to appreciate it.

G 7 | C 8 | P 8 | M 9 | O 7 | **89**



Wild Choppers
Nintendo 64
TK
Flying Arcade/Simulation

Being an ace gunner on Nuclear Strike, I took to Wild Choppers with some degree of ease, and found the control system to be adequate (but no more than that). I watched the two frame animated polygon general with alarm, I selected the music off option, and choice my pilot from a hangar full of top guns. Then I lifted my craft off the grassy knoll and swooped into my first Pylon, trying desperately to control my lurching craft as rockets rained down on my parade. But as my patience grew, I started to enjoy myself (of course, you need the correct chopper and armaments), flying countless sorties of a differing nature (including fending off enemy planes from a passenger jet!) until my thumbs bled. Fun, but not great.

G 8 | C 8 | P 8 | M 5 | O 7 | **80**

With the hideous Aero Fighters still fresh in my memory, I took to the skies with hope in my mind. Hope that blurred textures, angular environments and sluggish gameplay would be forever buried in the back of my brain. What I found with this was a valiant attempt at creating a believable, yet arcade style helicopter sim; a 3D version of the isometric Strike series if you will. However, the fact that the planes moved in slow-motion, and the slightly annoying control system prevented me from total emersion, especially as some of the later levels are so cool...

G 7 | C 7 | P 8 | M 4 | O 9 | **83**

Arrrgh! Wild Choppers is a great looking game, that would be cool if it weren't for two glaring flaws: the control and the speed. The control is set up so that you MUST use the d-pad and analog stick simultaneously. Fine, if you happen to be left handed. But for the rest of us there is no option to use the C buttons as an alternative. And the choppers just fly soooo slowly that at times you want to get out and push. I feel like the rider in the Jet Moto TV ad. Still, if you can get by these problems there is fun to be had with Wild Choppers.

G 8 | C 4 | P 8 | M 7 | O 7 | **75**



MK Mythologies
Nintendo 64
Midway
Action/Adventure

Trial and error, it's all about trial and error. As corny and lame as this game may seem there are things in it you'll want to see. The problem is that MKM's controls are so ultra-stiff and overly complicated that it may take you 'til next X-mas to get there. The N64 version spares us from the I'm a B-movie actor in a funny suit (clean too, not a speck of dirt on it) live action crap, and for that I now love the cart format, but otherwise the game's pretty much the same as the PS version. Some nice polys and as I said, their is meat on these bones, you just have to keep eating, and eating...

G 8 | C 6 | P 8 | M 4 | O 8 | **70**

I had hoped (in vain, apparently) that after the torture of the PS rev I would be able to slip by the N64 version unscathed; no such luck. This is everything the PS game was but not quite as 'good'. It's got all the music, gameplay, and almost all of the graphics of the PS game. Alas, the visuals take a hit as cart limitations strike again. After the first level the game degenerates into a dithered mess, as there simply isn't enough memory to go around. Even the BG animation drops slightly in comparison to the PS disc. And the best part of the previous version—the FMV—is now gone as well (no surprise there). At least Midway has MM V3 to pick up the slack this month.

G 7 | C 4 | P 4 | M 7 | O 6 | **40**

I didn't like this game on PS and I really don't like it on N64. Whether you're an MK fan or not, you've got to admit that the combination of MK style fighting and - of all things - platforming action just does not work. The 3D backgrounds are a little better on N64 but everything else is worse than the PS version. The animation is just a bad joke. Tobias claimed that Mythologies does not fit into any particular genre. I know a genre it fits into: 'bad' games.

G 6 | C 5 | P 4 | M 5 | O 7 | **40**











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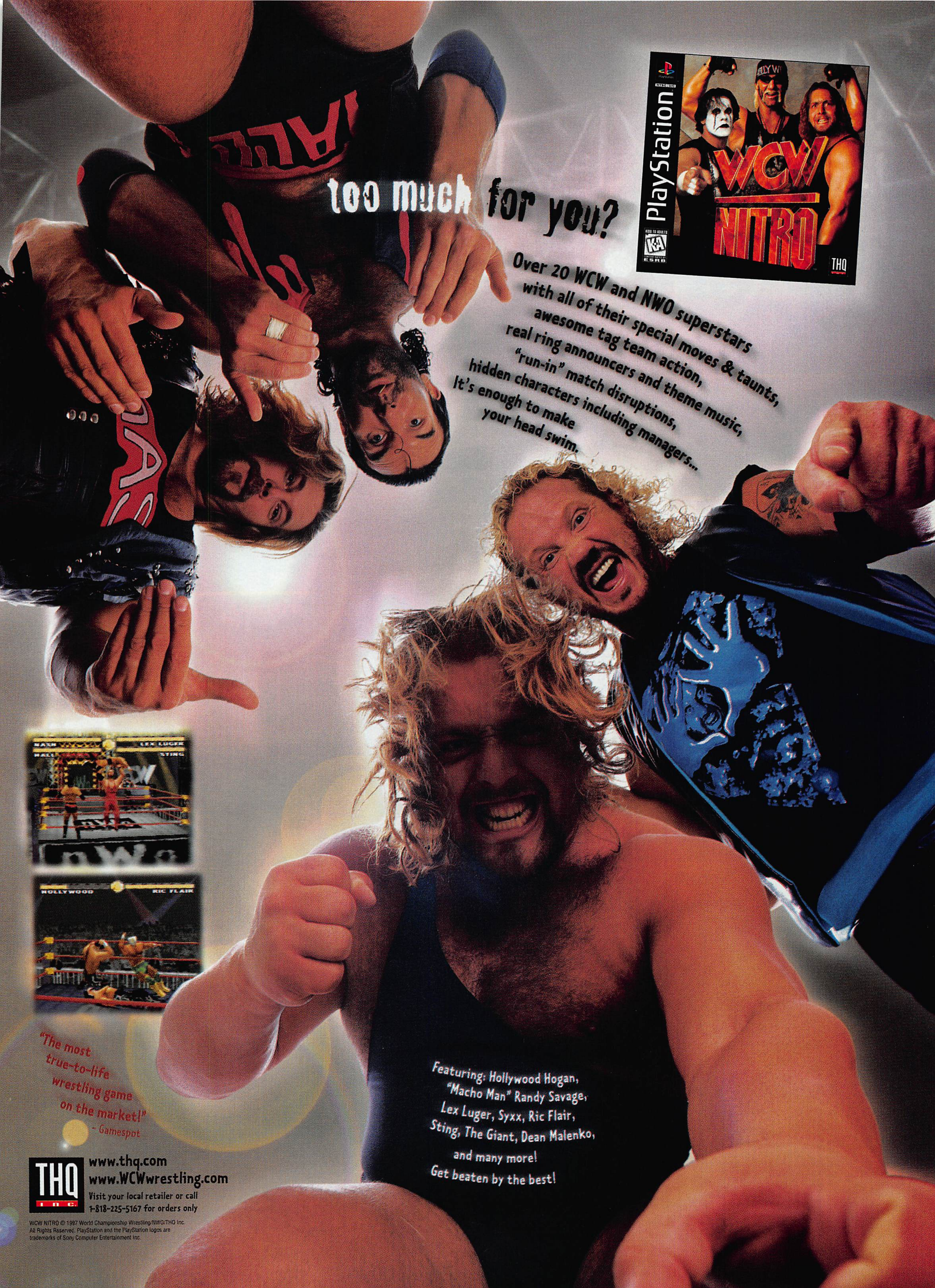
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Bomberman 64
Extra Continues

Humberto Villeges
Hanover Park IL



This is an easy way to get extra continues with some small effort on your part. First, start an Adventure game and choose the White Glacier World. At the start point, drop down to the next platform, and circle counter clockwise, heading to the skiing enemies on the right. Walk up the slope that the enemies are skiing off of and head to the right where you'll come to a platform. Drop to the next platform next to a Snowman, then drop two more till you see a small opening. You'll come out into an area where there's a cabin to your right, and a slope to your left. Run up the slope to your left, and watch the high winds here. When you reach the top where it levels off, walk diagonal right, so as to push against the wall while walking right. If done correctly, you'll go right into a garden full of goodies! Best of all, you can repeat this trick by going in and out of the first door (the one next to the cabin). Great trick, Humberto!

Extra hints from Mad Dangobomber:

THROW BOMBS AT EVERYTHING!!

From butterflies to bunnies, you might get lucky. For instance, in the Winter Glacier level, blasting bunnies (as demented as it seems), will give you a valuable heart.

Extra battle arenas

Press START repeatedly as quickly as possible on the main menu screen. You have to have the fingers of Beethoven in order to do it rapidly enough. You'll hear a chime sound and the four new arenas (In The Gutter, Sea Sick, Blizzard Battle, and Lost at Sea) will be enabled.



Command & Conquer
Passwords and Codes Galore!

Michael Brown
Phenix City AL



The following are Mission passwords for the Allies:

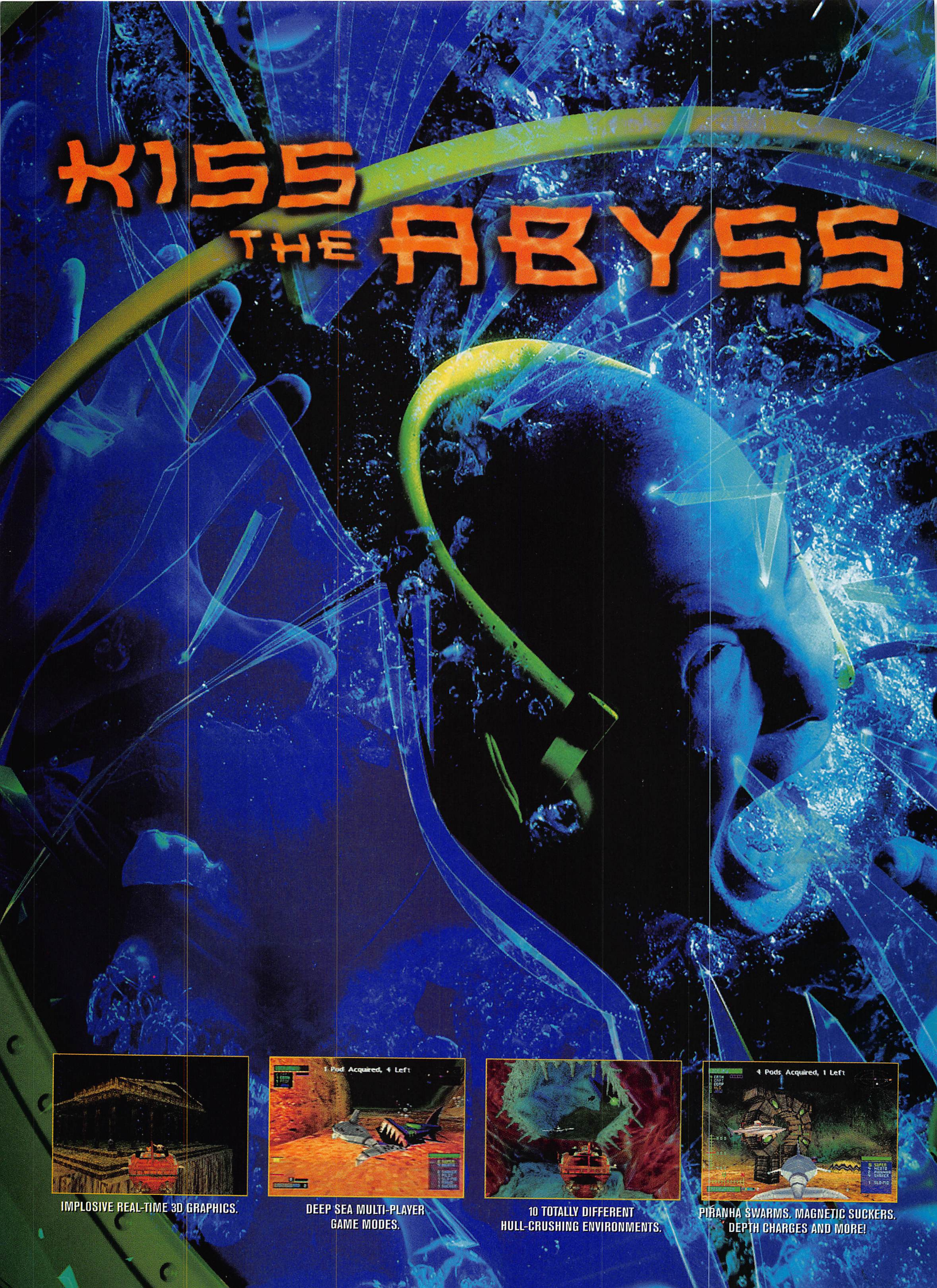
MISSION 1 - T3T2J07H0
MISSION 2 - IHH7M3464
MISSION 3 - X63VC9G3F
MISSION 4 - 4CCYX6IZO
MISSION 5 - 3YBM21X6B
MISSION 6 - COY9YB361
MISSION 7 - YQEMD5XSR
MISSION 8 - 9WAUZUIM2
MISSION 9 - 07FRYGGOJ
MISSION 10 - T9FEZL2P6
MISSION 11 - XN37ODVZV
MISSION 12 - CN0U6NANV
MISSION 13 - LKRJC9BWP
FINAL MISSION - DV79Q92ZS

Game cheats:
Enter the following by using the Team Buttons on the Tool Bar using the Circle button.
MONEY - Square, Square, Circle, X, Triangle, Circle
NUKE - Circle, X, Circle, Triangle, Square, Triangle
SOYLENT GREEN - X, Circle, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, X





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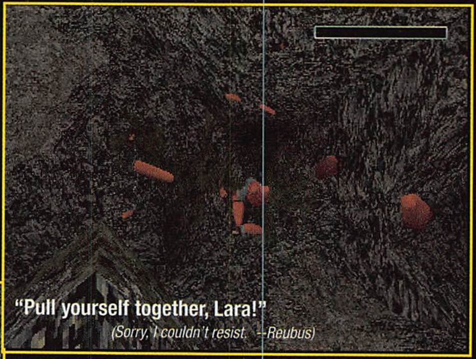
Tomb Raider 2
Level Skip and All Weapons Code!

Rob Ferrara
Ellington CT

What can we say? The level skip and all weapons code is back. But if done improperly it can yield unexpected results (see screenshots). All codes are entered when playing Lara.

Very Wrong Weapons Trick:
Entering this bogus code will make luscious Lara shatter and explode. For those who wish to witness this spectacle, Hold R2, step forward, backward, release R2, rotate Lara at least 1 1/2 times around (by pressing left or right on the D-Pad) and press Jump. An early Fourth of July fireworks display... thank you Lara!

Weapons Code:
Now to truly get this cheat, holding R2, step left, right, left, walk one step back, one step forward, release R2, rotate Lara at least 3 times (by pressing left or right on D-Pad), and perform a backward twisting leap.



"Pull yourself together, Lara!"
(Sorry, I couldn't resist. --Reubus)





Level Skip:
Tired of Yetis beating you to a pulp? Follow the same directions for the Weapons code, but after rotating Lara at least 3 times (by pressing left or right on the D-Pad), perform a forward twisting leap.

Various Quick Bits We Didn't Have Time To Get Shots Of...

Megaman X4 (Saturn & PS)
Megamans and Zeros secret armors!
Juan Martinez, Harrisburg PA

Capcom's dynasty of Megaman games has always had its share of unique secrets.

For Saturn
Megamans: On the player select screen, highlight Megaman, and press B, B, left, left, left, left, left, left, then hold the Left and Right Shift buttons and press start. There are subtle differences at first, but once you get the first capsule at the Web Spider, you'll get the Ultimate Armor, which includes all the upgrades.
Zeros: On the player select screen, highlight Zero, hold the Right Shift button and press right, right, right, right, right, right, release the Right Shift button, press and hold the B button and press Start. Zero's colors will be black and gray!

For Playstation
Megamans: Tap Circle, Circle, left, left, left, left, left, left, then hold both L1 and R2 buttons. (same place as above)
Zeros: Hold R1, press right, right, right, right, right, right, release R1. Press Circle and Start at the same time.

Battle Arena Toshinden 3 (PS)
Secret Characters
Hal Garvey Jr., Highland CA

Play as Shou
To play as Shou, you must unlock all the sub-bosses, then beat the game with Vermillion on a level 3 setting or higher.

Play as Abel
Beat the game with Shou at a level 7 difficulty.

Play As Veil
Beat the game with Abel on a level 7 difficulty.

Play as Neru
Beat the game with Veil at a level 7 difficulty.

Duke Nukem 64 (N64)
All Weapons Cheat
Eric Smith, Newnan GA

To enable all weapons for this awesome corridor bloodfest, at the main menu screen, press left, left, Left Shift, Left Shift, right, right, left, left. Go to the cheat menu and press Right Shift, Right C, right, Left Shift, Left C, left, Right C, right.

Dragonball GT (PS)
Hidden characters
Justin Fackler, Acworth GA

To get all the hidden characters without tediously beating the game over and over again, at the Title screen, press right, left, down, up, right, left, down up.

Sonic R (Saturn)
Secret Characters
Paul Sandbar, Los Angeles CA

Collect all 5 Sonic Coins in a race and finish in the top three. You will then face off against a hidden character for each section.

Resort Island - Mecha Sonic
Radical City - Mecha Tails
Regal Ruin - Egg Robo
Reactive Factory - Mecha Knuckles

Duplicate Characters:
Tired of the constant whining from your opponent? Then in versus race mode, have the second player highlight the same character as the first player and hold X + Y + Z. Now both you and your complaining opponent will see who has the real skill for speed thrills. This also works for Super Sonic and all hidden characters


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Resident Evil 2
Secret Alternate Uniforms!

Well, it wouldn't be a true Resident Evil game without the change of uniform secret. Fortunately, Capcom has again included the change of uniform secret in there, though it's going to be a bit tougher to perform this time around.



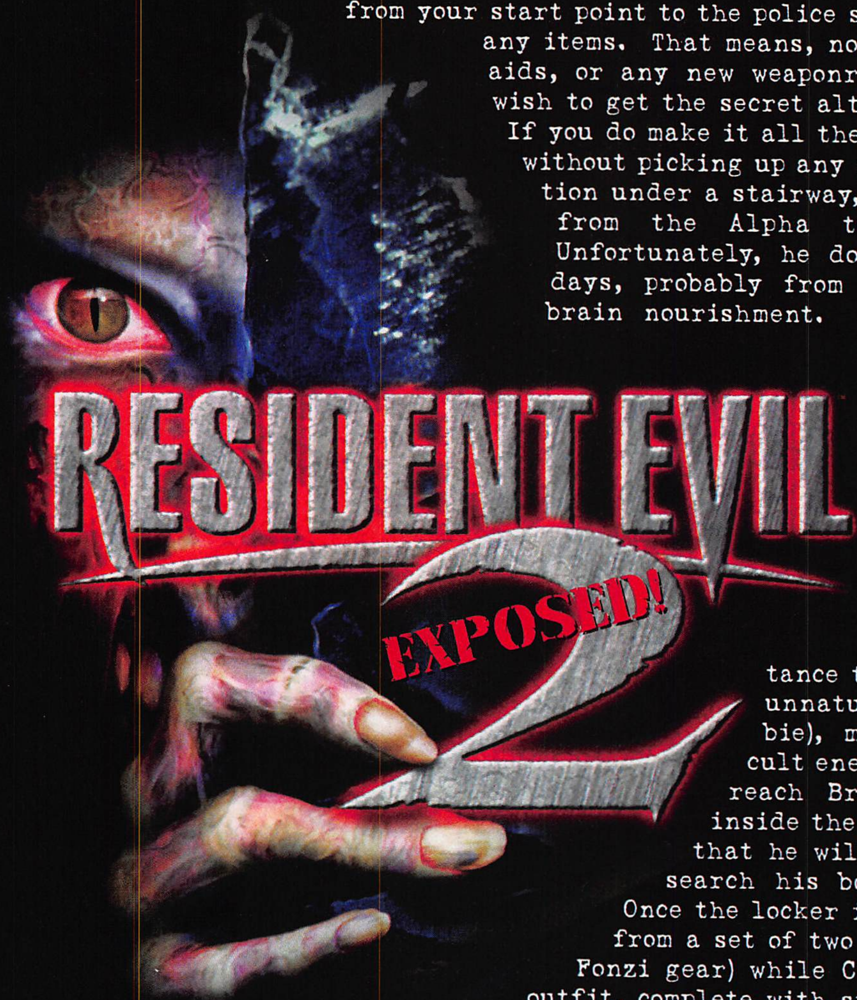
Start off either with Claire or Leon (non "R" versions only), in this city area. Weaving and dodging like an NBA player is definitely necessary, to avoid being a meal of the undead.



Saving ammunition is important in those worse case scenarios where you have to pull some pistol-whipping action. However, when you can run or use the knife when the situation presents itself.

To start, select only Claire or Leon (the special "R" versions don't get the change of clothes option) and from where you start in the City Area, make it all the way to the Raccoon Police Station. Sounds easy so far, considering that you have your trusty pistol with you. Stop the wishful thinking and comeback to reality...this is Capcom, remember? They're master trainers of hardcore gaming skills. Besides making it to the Raccoon Police Station alive, during this romp from your start point to the police station you CANNOT pick up any items. That means, no extra rounds, no medical aids, or any new weaponry can be attained if you wish to get the secret alternate uniforms.

If you do make it all the way to the Police Station without picking up any items, near the police station under a stairway, you'll find Brad Zwikker from the Alpha team of *Resident Evil*. Unfortunately, he doesn't look too good these days, probably from a lack of proper human brain nourishment. Well, somewhere in his jacket, he holds a key to a locker where the optional outfits are locked in, which means of course that you're going to have to kill him to get it. Unlike other undead beings, Brad will take quite a bit of damage before going down. His resistance to damage coupled with an unnatural quickness (for a zombie), makes him quite a difficult enemy. Fortunately, once you reach Brad, you can grab items inside the station without worrying that he will be gone. Once disposed, search his body for the Special Key. Once the locker is found, Leon can change from a set of two outfits (workout camis or Fonzi gear) while Claire can don her cowboy outfit, complete with six-shooter.





Hopefully at this point in the picture, you haven't gained a scratch, nor taken into the temptation of grabbing items. The secret is close when you reach this gated door.



Head down to this long pathway after entering through the gates. The footsteps heard ahead indicate another unfriendly abomination hungering for live flesh.



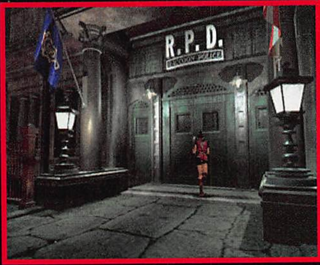
Why it's Brad Zwikker, from the original *Resident Evil*. Unfortunately, he doesn't look any better since getting pecked by crows, and he's kinda hungry.



Possessing incredible toughness and remarkable quickness for a zombie, Brad won't go down after the first few bullets you fire... or even after the next few.



Simply put, you're going to need either more ammo to kill him, or become very proficient in the knife. When death finally becomes him, search his body for the Special Key.



After taking the Special Key from Brad, you turn around just to make sure he's down for the count. With renewed confidence, enter the Police Station where the trek has just begun.



See the room pictured to the left? This is the locker for both Claire and Leon where they will find their new outfits. Use the Special Key to unlock the door.



Within the locker doors you'll find some swingin' gear. Not only do you look good obliterating zombies to a fleshy pulp, but your armpits won't be quite as sweaty.



Leon will have two extra outfits to change into: training camis or a James Dean-ish leather jacket and blue jeans. Claire get a romping, lassoing cowgirl gettup.



Claire's western themed clothing comes with, at no extra cost, an old Colt six-shooter. Claire will even fire it from the hip, like a true cowgirl would. Yee-haw!



Oh..I forgot to mention the optional SWAT team gear that both Claire and Leon can wear... wait a darn minute... there isn't such a thing! Who's that man pictured to the left creating a messy hill of assorted, bloody, zombie limbs with that large hand cannon. Is he friend or foe of our heroes? Will he give a helping hand in the game? Or will he plague Claire and Leon in their escape from this hell on Earth? Actually, the character causing mass carnage above is one of the secret characters in the game. "One of the secret characters in the game?", you gasp? Yes just one of the few secrets I will be unable to present to you...YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE? GET THE OFFICIAL GAMEFAN BOOK!!



Tekken 3

Tekken 3 is secretly being playtested in New York! The backgrounds are 2D!! It's not out in the States until Christmas next year! Yep, we've heard many a fine rumor about Namco's third installment of its phenomenal fight fest, and after acquiring some pretty high quality shots of the 30 PERCENT COMPLETE PLAYSTATION version of the game direct from Namco themselves, we thought we'd present a little featurette on the PlayStation version, along with what Namco of Japan has to say on the subject, and all the current rumor and wild speculation. Please note that this port-over looks to be one of the finest seen OF ALL TIME, and we're gagging for a playable copy, but for the moment, here's what the Tekken 3 experts in the office have uncovered on the subject.

The arcade Tekken 3 used a souped-up version of Namco's existing System 11 hardware (known imaginatively as System 12), and this allowed greater numbers polygons to be thrown about the screen. For the PlayStation however, Namco of Japan had no such luxury, and the slightly down-sized version is almost noticeable if you look closely at our PlayStation screenshots. Take for example, the Jun Kazama win pose. Look at Jun's torso, and you'll see it's not quite as well defined and slightly more angular on the PlayStation version.



Check the Jun Victory shots again. Look at the hands. You'll see the fingers are joined and slightly stumpy on the PlayStation version, (they were separate and longer for the arcade version). Could be Jun's fighting bandages, but we reckon there's less polygons on them there PlayStation fighting folk. They look slightly smaller, too.

Moving over to Korea for a spot of Tae Kwon Do with Hwoarang, you'll see that rather nifty temple looks a lot smaller on the PlayStation version with a little bit of detail lost. There's also talk of the backgrounds simply being 2D versions of the VF2-style 3D affairs seen in the arcade (the rumor regarding 2D backgrounds came from a very reliable source). Obviously, we haven't seen the game in motion yet, but it looks like the BGs could go either way. Personally, I reckon the backgrounds will be 3D.

Both the other ports of Tekken have featured slightly pixelly hit explosions when characters connect their series of crushing techniques, and this conversion looks to be no different. Check Mr Phoenix and his yellow halo of punishment. This looks to be more pixelly, as do the shards and sparkles of light from Jun's uppercut (hey, at least the shards and sparkles are in there!)?



Official word on these screenshots came directly from Mr Takanaka; Advisor in Namco's









Consumer Sale Division: "We have been quite secretive about Tekken 3 since April. Finally, we can show you the pictures of Tekken 3. Currently, the completion of the game is about 30 percent. Although because of the difference between the arcade spec and the PlayStation spec, we have problems. But everything is going well! We cannot tell you the release date of the game [in Japan] and the details of the game [Survival mode, CG openings, et cetera] right now, but we are trying to achieve a complete conversion of the Tekken 3 arcade to the PlayStation. Please wait for further news!"

Finally, Namco have stated that the game could ship in the U.S. directly after the March launch in Japan (although, we reckon that release date could slip). However, sources have also stated that Namco may delay the launch over here until Summer 98 or even later to cash in on more consumers and heightening the hype. Obviously, we want a U.S. translation ASAP, but it's up to Namco Hometek to deliver the product on time, or after months of drooling anticipation. Whatever the decision, look to GameFan to continue to provide you with the finest quality shots and information on what is surely to be the greatest console beat-'em-up of 1998. We'll be back Rave Warring very soon! *CH*









P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO

PUBLISHER - NAMCO

FORMAT - CD

\# OF PLAYERS - 1-2

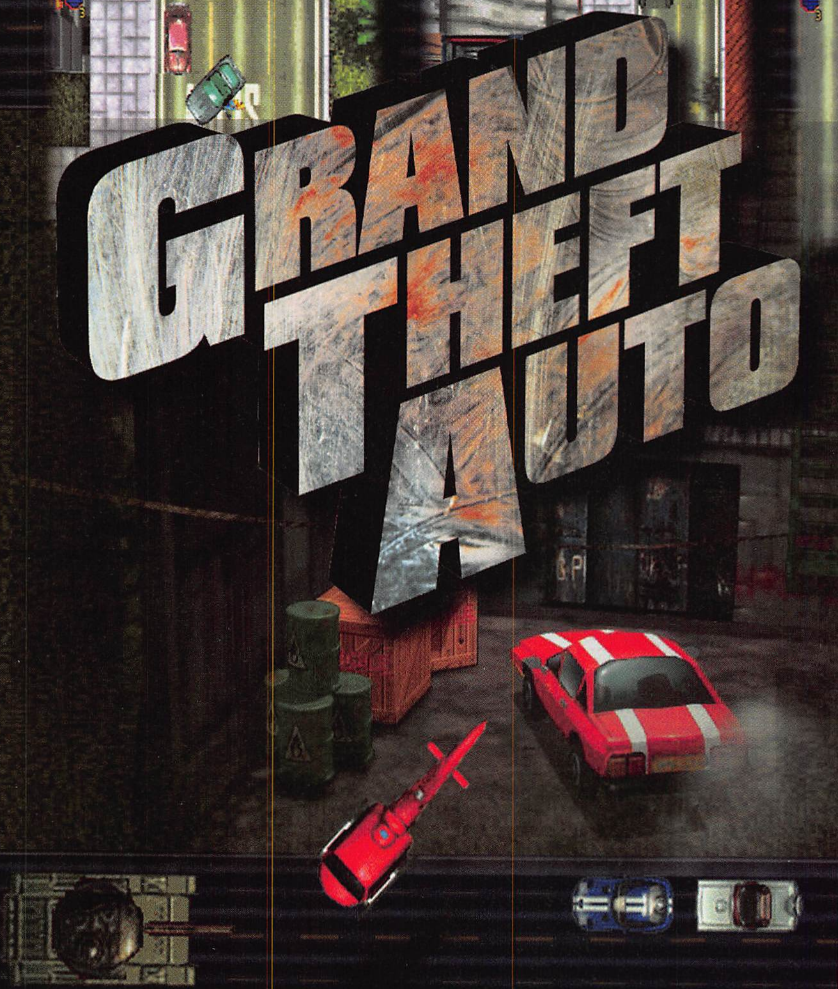
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - 2nd QTR '98



HAMBLETON Yep! ALL PlayStation shots! More Namco magic! Behold the third Rave War!

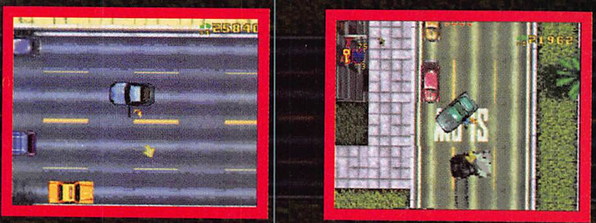




Yeehaa!!

This game is one of the finest titles I have played all year. Whilst controversial in it's theme, *GTA* has some of the best, action-packed gameplay of recent times. Already released in the UK and Europe, it met with frosty response from the censors. It basically involves your character (an up and coming criminal) participating in various taboo, underworld felonies. You are instructed by different gang bosses to carry out these crimes in exchange for money and status. Missions include rival gang assassination, drug-running, murder-one, car-jacking, bombing and every other type of dodgy, criminal activity that you can think of.

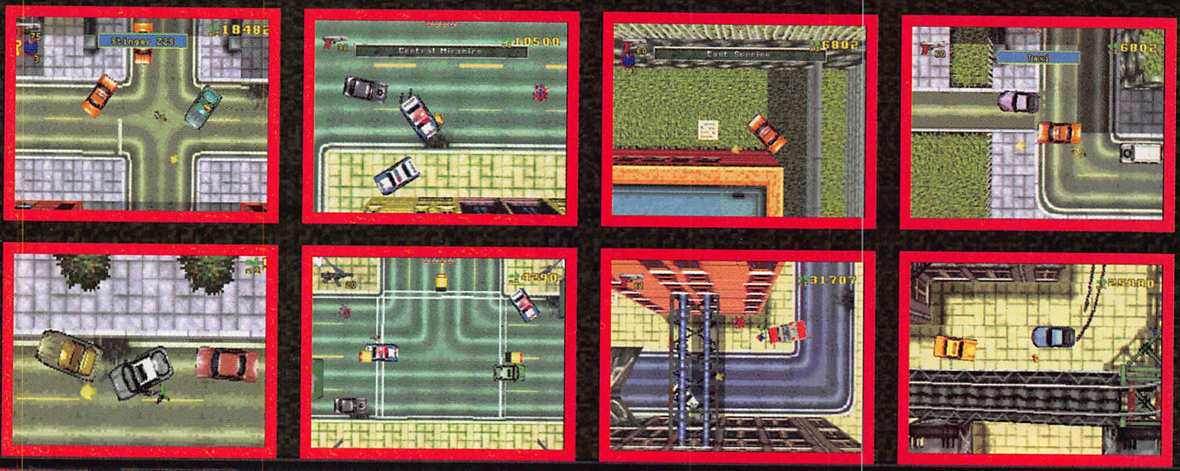
The game perspective is an overhead view of a city, and your little man runs round carrying out his tasks with incredible efficiency. The graphical style is very reminiscent of the old Atari classic game called *APB*, but this time, instead of upholding the law, you are constantly trying to break it! *GTA* features



many different types of personal weaponry, loads of different cars (ranging from crappy pick-ups to awesome Lamborghinis), and three different cities, each with two zones. The first few missions are easy enough to get to grips with, but from then on in, the game really starts to tax your would-be naughty thinking skills. Police force members will soon get wise to you if you mindlessly gun down innocent civilians, so discretion and stealth are the keys to an early success.

Now then, myself and Wolfie have been fighting to get our hands on this game, so we decided to write a double feature. No doubt he will try to convince you that he is better at *GTA* than I am. Do not believe him. After all, who could really doubt the criminal mind of The Guvnor??? Oh yeah, don't get on your high moral horses about this game. It's not real, it's not gonna corrupt people and the outrageous adult language and game content means you'll have to be 17 or over to buy it. The industry needs more games like this. It's a fine polished product, and deserves to sell bucket-loads. ***TG***

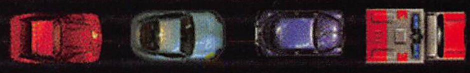




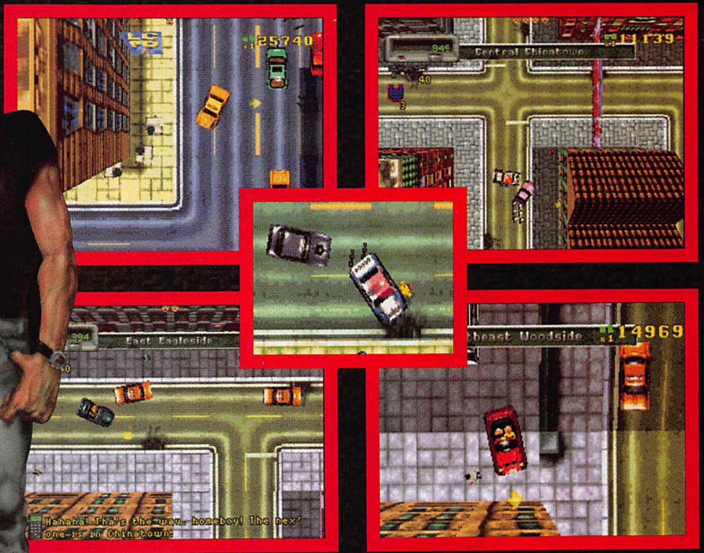


I'm driving down the streets of New York. I'm just beatin' the hell out of my new Viper Coupe. So what, I just stole it five minutes ago anyway. "Hmm", I think to myself as I ram an ambulance onto the sidewalk,"I've never driven one of these before." I quickly yank out the driver and I'm on my merry way, gleefully sounding the sirens and running red lights (as well as over pedestrians). But the cops in this town don't take kindly to this sort of behavior, and soon I'm being chased by one of NY's finest. I take a wrong turn and lose control, rear-ending a taxi. The cop is out of his car guns blazing as I'm backing away from the cab. I have no choice but to run him over. ***Splat!*** "Hmm..." That cop car is starting to look pretty nice. I take it. Oh man is it fast, too. I hear over the police band they're after me. I blow through an intersection and two squad cars pick up my tail. A quick left and..."Oh no! A road block!" I smash through, taking out a boy in blue in the process. "Sorry." The adrenaline is really pumping as I slam head-on into a blue-and-white. Two more block my rear. I get out, "What the Hell, I got a machine gun." It's raining bullets; mine and theirs. Cops are dropping like flies, squad cars exploding. I might just make it. I make a break for it, but I take a bullet and go down like a sack of dirt. "Oh well. I did deserve this."

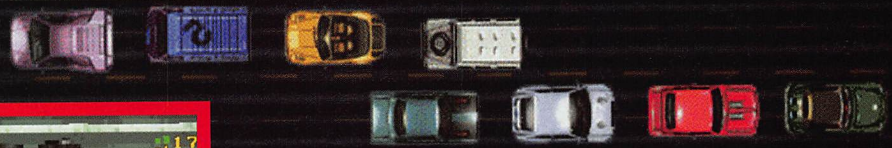
No this isn't the 9 O'clock news or a scene from the sequel to the movie, ***Heat***. It's the latest game from Britain, ***Grand Theft Auto,*** and one of the most fun games I have played in a while. It's an over head view of of a city, (this level happens to be New York, but there's levels in L.A. and Miami as well) with the perspective reminding one of those high speed pursuits as seen on the nightly news.







Guest reviewer: Terry Wolfinger





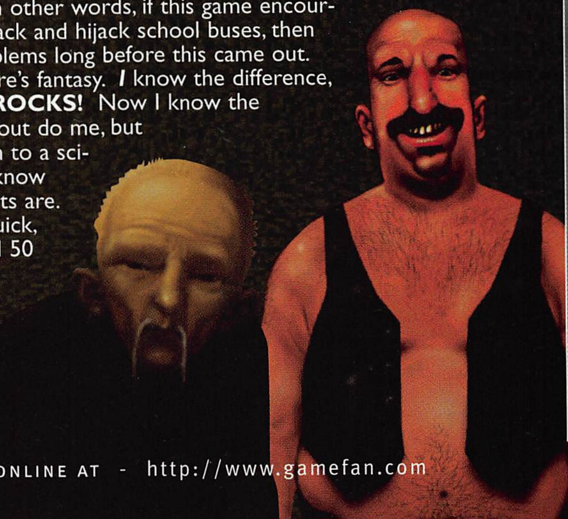




You have the ability to "car-jack" any vehicle you desire. You can upgrade autos whenever the desire hits you. There's plenty of look-alikes of Vettes, Vipers, Lamborghinis (omigodisthiscarfast), trucks, buses, etc., all ripe for the taking. But be careful, as aforementioned behavior will attract the law.

Once with wheels, you then get directed to the phones by means of a floating arrow that you follow. You then get sent on missions, or "jobs", by such wonderfully whacked people as crime bosses and drug dealers. So you're off on your various assignments: stealing taxis for a bank job, going on drug runs, offing people that know too much, blowing up Police precincts... you know, every day type stuff. Along the way you find crates with power-ups such as weapons, ammo etc., and things that help you complete your goal. I often just found myself just looking for trouble for the sheer fun of it.

It seems ridiculous to even have to say this, but kids, ***PLEEZ***, do not try this at home! Look, the things you do in this game are just plain wrong, bottom line, but that is exactly what makes *GTA* such a blast. And if you don't know the difference between right and wrong yet, you shouldn't even be let out of your house and your parents should be publicly slapped. I guess I feel the need to pre-defend this game because of all the politically correct 90s wrath it will surely attract. In other words, if this game encourages you to go deal crack and hijack school buses, then Buddy, you've had problems long before this came out. There's reality and there's fantasy. ***I*** know the difference, **AND THIS GAME ROCKS!** Now I know the Guvnor thinks he can out do me, but I got the insanity down to a science! Besides, we all know what pansies those Brits are. Snatch this game up quick, before its banned in all 50 states. ***W***



PREVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - DMA
- PUBLISHER - ASC
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM
- AVAILABLE - MARCH



GUVNOR
You'll never take me alive, copper! You hear?!

BLOODY ROAR

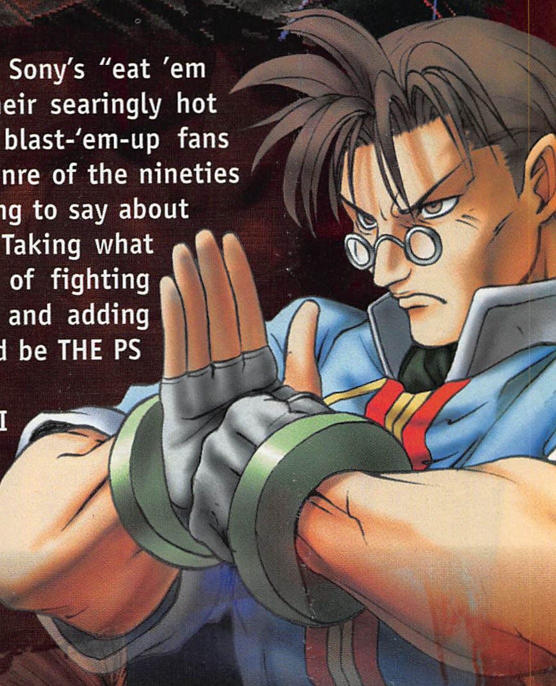


Sony's PlayStation has been host to numerous fighting contests of the polygonal kind. There's been medieval warriors hacking at one another in limb-cleaving rage; heroes and villains from a galaxy far, far away battling to the bitter end; heck, there's even been trendy kids from the SoCal area having it out. For the better part of '97 it has not been a good year for the seemingly ever-popular 3D donneybrook—all while the redeemer awaits vindication in the Land of the Rising Sun (that's *Tobal 2* to you and me). Ah, but what we have here, in the form of one of the first pledges for the fighting class of '98, may prove that redemption for the genre is possible. *Bloody Roar* is the name of the initiate, let the hazing begin...



A product of the Raizing development group of Japan, *Bloody Roar* is yet another in a seemingly endless stream of 3D fighters to grace Sony's "eat 'em with a smile" world-beater. Known mostly for their searingly hot shooters in the Japanese market (and hardcore blast-'em-up fans abroad) this is their first crack at, arguably, the genre of the nineties (although RPGs may yet have something to say about that). And what a shot it is! Taking what they felt to be the best parts of fighting games from the past five years and adding their own unique twist, this could be THE PS fighting game of '98.





Seeing as how this is a preview, I 'll do the best I can to curb my rabid love of this strikingly incredible game. All of this is based on my experience with the utterly insane alpha rev that arrived in my 'weary to death of 3D fighters'

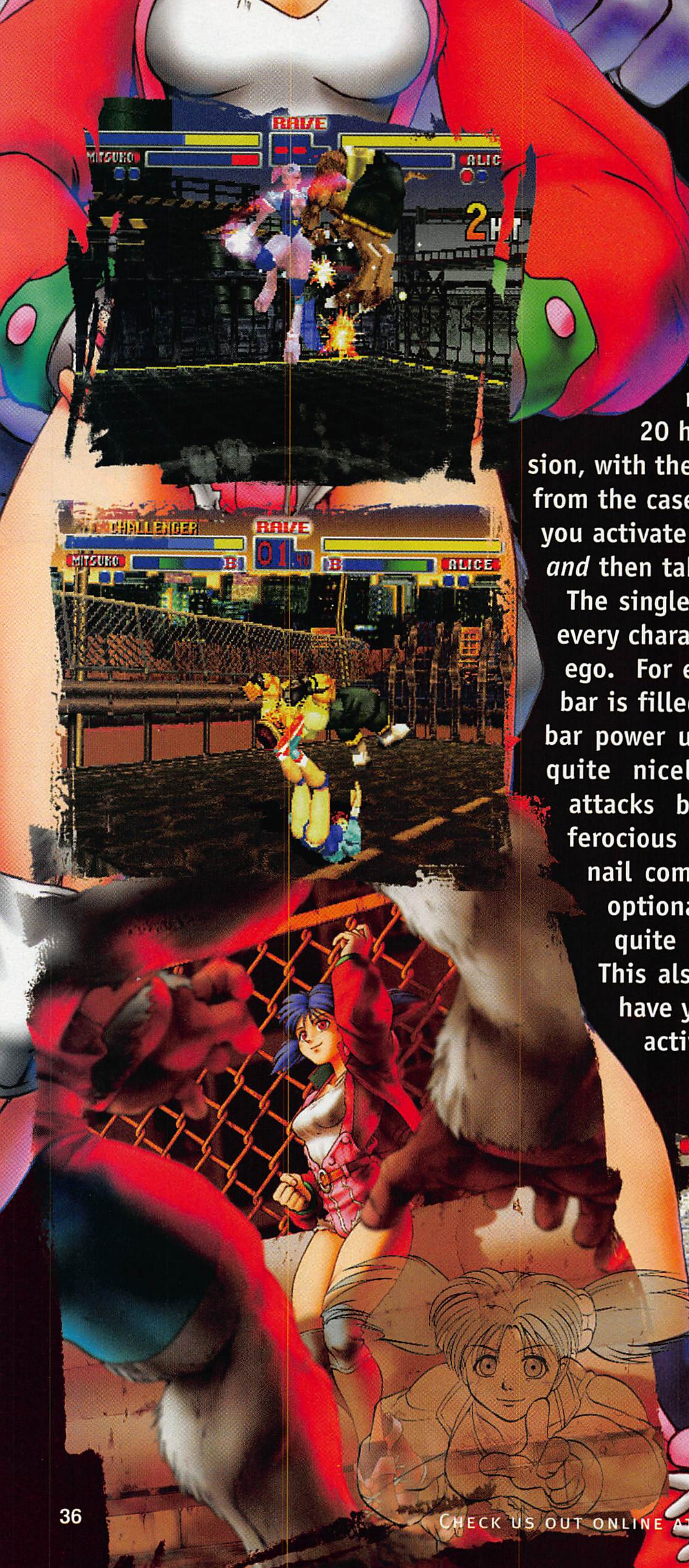


PREVIEW | PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - RAIZING
- PUBLISHER - SCEA
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - FIRST QUARTER

ECM
Another 3D fighter?! Oh the pain... hey wait, this is really cool!







hands recently. I figure it may be payback for all the other 3D fighters I've had to endure in recent months (hazing for the rookie, don't ya know).

The gameplay is an amazing amalgamation of assorted assaults (whew!). It features elements of *VF* and *Tekken* (of course) along with a heaping helping of *Fighting Vipers* along for the ride. The combat is juggle intensive, with combos in excess of 20 hits already apparent. And while this may elicit snorts of derision, with the implication that it isn't much of a 'serious' fighter, that is far from the case. See, the only way you're going to get combos like that is if you activate the single most innovative feature in a fighter in a long time *and* then take one more step.

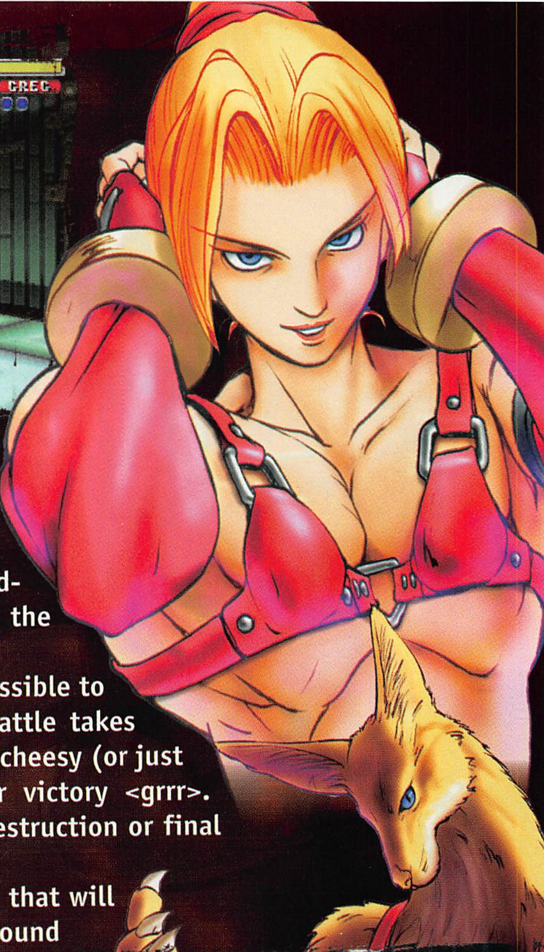
The single most intense feature in this title is the ability for each and every character to transform—on the fly—into an anthropomorphic alter-ego. For example, Yugo can 'morph' into a werewolf provided his beast bar is filled sufficiently. This is accomplished through traditional super bar power up means: Beating on your opponent usually does the trick quite nicely. Once 'beastorized', attacks become that much more ferocious and fantastic. Tooth and nail come into play and with the optional blood turned on, it gets quite crimson in short order. This also opens up the ability to have your 'beastorized' character activate hyper mode, much as













in *Fighting Vipers*. This allows for even faster movement and insane combos; juggle your foes into oblivion (20+ hit combo madness!). You can, however, disable hyper mode in the options menu.

Taking a further cue from *Fighting Vipers*, it is possible to knock an opponent out of whatever arena the battle takes place in. While this can tend to get aggravating, as the more cheesy (or just plain bad) players will abuse this; simply attempting to 'ring out' for victory <grrr>. However, this can also be adjusted in the options allowing for either no destruction or final round breaking only.

While I'd like to rave about the graphics and music for a good long while, that will have to wait for the full review. Taking a look at the various screenshots around these pages will probably convince you of the visual assault this game presents. And if I further told you that it all runs at upwards of 60 FPS with amazing transparencies, you'd probably be drooling even more. Simply put, this is the best looking fighter to grace the PS yet—better even than the mighty *Tobal 2*. The music comes in arcade (in Japan it debuted as a System 11-style title) and arranged flavors and is decent as are the various sound effects—we'll get to all of that in greater detail come the actual review.



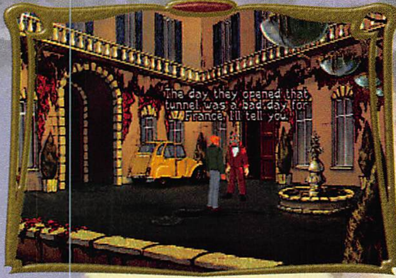


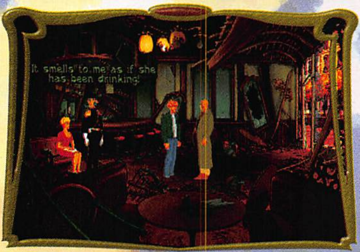
As it stands, this looks to be the best PS fighter in many moons. Seeing as how we get the royal thumb-nose on *Tobal 2*, it's nice to see this one getting the full Sony treatment. I'll be back with the full-on review in the next issue. Until then, sit tight and prepare for the best domestically released PS fighter since *Soul Blade*. ECM











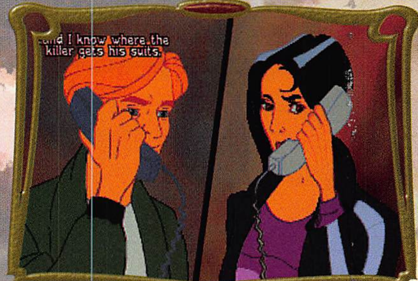


The "next-gen" systems have been a cold, cruel place to the graphic adventure game; much like the reception GF eds receive on the equally cold and cruel 'Net (ya need flame-proof attire if you venture out there). While there has been representation of most PC-spawned genres, with exception to the pretty decent *Discworld* games, it's been as dry as Reubus' sense of humor for this PC standby. Well, it took some doing, but here's another fine example on its way over from PC-Land: *Broken Sword*, by T•HQ. Proving that they are capable of doing excellent games after falling face-down with *Vs*, T•HQ recovers its footing with weeble-wobble-like grace.

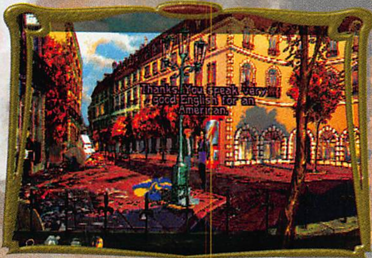
Broken Sword (I'd abbreviate it, but...) plays almost exactly like countless examples of the genre on PC from Lucas and Sierra: Point and click your way across the various 'hot spots' in the hope of solving various puzzles so that new areas open up; nothing new and revolution-

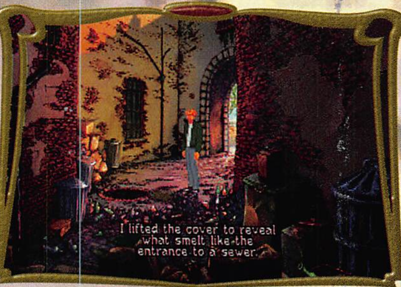
BROKEN SWORD





ary in that, but it's fun if you're into that sort of thing (and I am, with a vengeance). Don't think for a second, though, that this is like *Myst* or graphic adventures of that ilk—the puzzles actually require logic to solve. Even after getting stuck for a few hours (at which point you may be wreathed in your own torn out hair) the solution will hit you, at which point you can start kicking yourself—hard—for missing it in the first place.





The story casts you as George Stobbard, clueless Californian extraordinaire. After almost getting blown to itsy-bitsy pieces while enjoying a brief repast at a wonderful little Paris cafe, replete with singing birds, good coffee, and a rather voluptuous French waitress with a penchant for drink. After the cafe erupts into flames due to the deeds of a particularly nasty clown (yes, the type you find in a circus, frightening children), George is off on a quest to solve the murder of the apparent target of said bomb blast. Essentially it's a murder mystery, although it becomes much more than that as the game progresses. Also very important to note is the witty sense of humor prevalent throughout the game—jokes about Europeans abound (mostly French vs. English stuff). So as not to spoil things too much—that's what the review is for—let's move on.



The graphics and music are terrific. The game and all the characters are rendered in traditional cel animation, and move with tremendous fluidity and detail—many thanks to the developer for this rare boon in the super-saturated world of gratuitous polygons. The backgrounds also feature great attention to detail and feature a beautiful painted look. The music, which is mostly atmospheric, fits the game like a glove.

Not much more I can say at this point other than thank God! It's about time we were bestowed another game of this obvious quality. We'll delve further into the mystery of the *Broken Sword* in the next issue. 'Till then, *viva la France*! ***ECM***

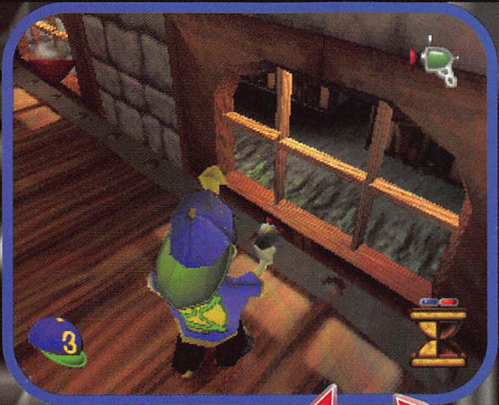
P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER -	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - T•HQ	DIFFICULTY - MODERATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - 2ND QTR. '98



ECM
Viva La Difference!




PSYGNOSIS COMMISSIONS SONIC'S ADOPTED PARENTS FOR AN EXCURSION INTO THE MINDS OF MARIO'S MINIONS...

RASCAL





Travellers Tale (Sonic's keepers), known world wide for their work with Mickey Mouse and Sega's favorite hedgehog, have crafted yet another spectacle, The latest work - *Rascal* for Psygnosis seems to be the team's first stab at a PlayStation bound *Mario*-esque platformer. Of course *Rascal's* a hipper, edgier character with his baggy duds and Dennis the Menace attitude but at heart, he at least knows where Mario lives. Certainly they both have a taste for the surreal. that's for sure. In Rascal's case he ends up in the wrong place at the right time, entering his dad's lab just in time to see him abducted by a hideous hour glass-shaped freak from another dimension. Rascal's dad is a full on geek of the week but what's a boy to do?! The house becomes one big portal factory... and we are the benefactors!






P PREVIEW

PlayStation

- ELOPER - TRAVELLERS
- BLISHER - PSYGNOSIS
- ORMAT - CD
- AYERS - 1
- D TY - INTERMEDIATE
- A ILABLE - 1ST Q. '98



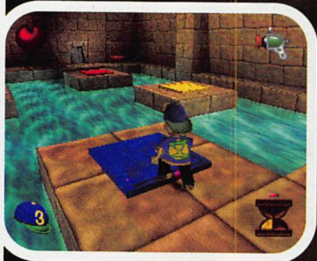
E. STORM

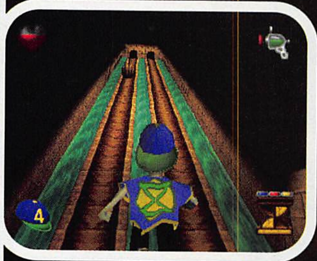
Oh yeah. This is more fun than a bag of Chia Heads!

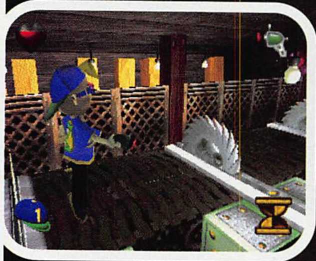








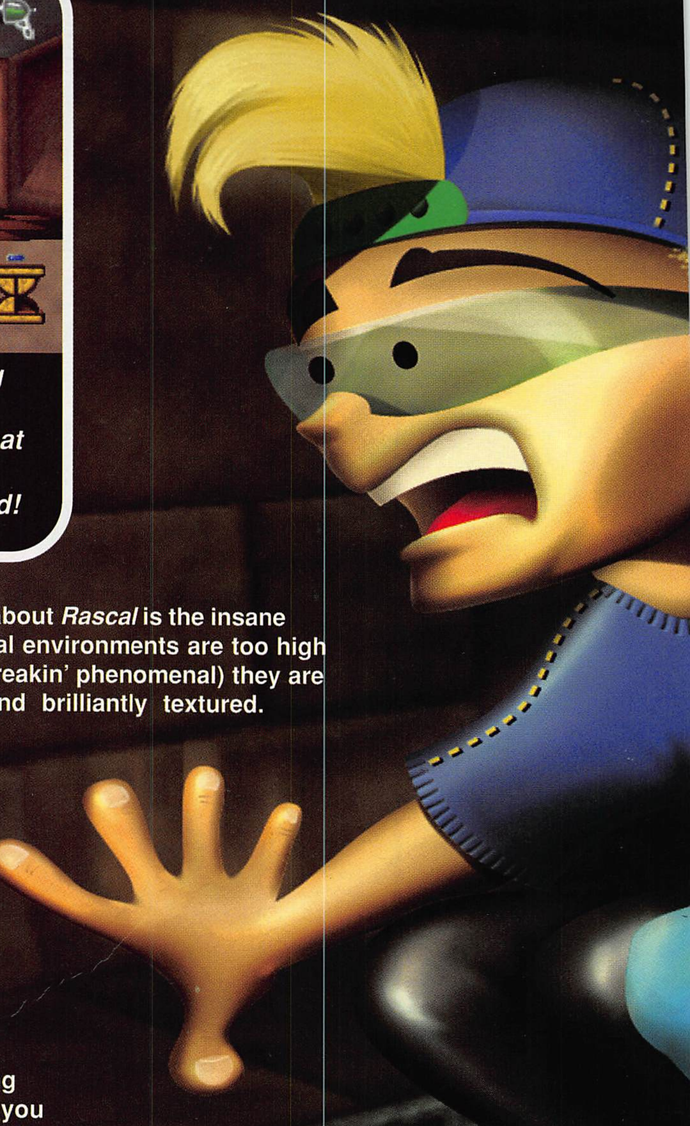








A big part of Rascal *is finding keys to open corresponding doors. Vast interiors await that will astound and amaze even the most polygonally impaired!*



The first thing that grabbed me about *Rascal* is the insane lighting. Forget that the polygonal environments are too high -res looking to exist, (they look freakin' phenomenal) they are also extremely beautifully lit and brilliantly textured. The music's pumpin', there are colored keys to find for corresponding doors and I'm a happy camper... indoors... with no tent... and a cold Pepsi... and a PlayStation. So I'm not a camper. I am happy. As you set fourth in *Mario* fashion, just when you're saying to yourself, "been there, done that" (although I for one enjoy doing things I love over and over) you arrive at a peculiar dead end. Look down bonehead, it's a hover board! These sequences turned out to be but one of quite a few clever diversions, and the game is still a long way from being done! The action takes place at an astonishing 60 fps pace and is heavily adventure-based although jumping does often come into play. You must search not only for keys and pieces of each area's puzzle but for health and gun power as well. While doing so, in constantly changing times throughout history, don't be surprised if you run into some of the best polygonal graphics you've ever seen. *Rascal* is an action/adventure/platform legend in the making. It has all the necessary ingredients and then some. Stay tuned for a full blown review just as soon as a final revision arrives. ***ES***







DENNIS THE MENACE WITH A GUN!!

Whoa dude, this half pipe is gnarly! Yeah, and its dark, and wet, and slimy too. This ain't no skate park bro. Actually I admire that Rascal can shred on such a short board!!

Like any good video game star, Rascal is an excellent swimmer. Find big bubbles to keep from drowning, it's an ugly way to go.

Breath of Fire 3





Okay, it's official: This is a good month for RPG players. First we have *Final Fantasy Tactics*, a gorgeous little strategy gem with a cool storyline and Square-tastic play-mechanics. Then we have *Tactics Ogre*, the fore-runner to most of today's great strategy/RPGs, and a sound, if somewhat dated classic investment. Next there's an obscure little title by the name of *Shining Force 2*. Bad joke. This amazing epic has me glued to the screen day and night! Ah... then finally we come to *Breath of Fire 3*, Capcom's long-awaited (?) 32-bit sequel, and the subject of this pre-final preview. Now, *BOF 3* may flow at a slightly (ahem) slower pace than the current hot-selling US RPG, *FFVII*, but there's definitely enough game here to provide a lengthy quest. And while *BOF 3* appears to be aimed at a slightly younger audience, there's no denying the old-skool appeal it exudes. You're not going to find another RPG this "traditional" on your PS anytime soon.

From a technical point of view, *Breath of Fire 3* is a very good looking game. The rich quality to the 3D play-fields, when combined with such well animated character sprites, might lead one to believe the game is entirely hand-drawn. Well, at first glance anyway (!). The frame rate is very high and perfectly consistent at















around 30 fps. You can rotate the camera in all directions within a 45 degree circumference, although not on the fly (you have to stop moving to look, then it returns to normal).

However, despite the good looks, *Breath of Fire 3* is a pretty slow-moving RPG. There's too much loading (because of big spells and plenty of animation), and the battles are unexciting. Opponents don't make contact with each other (not even close) except during spells, so the fighters basically swing their weapons at the air. This kind of puts a damper on things, at least in the satisfying attacks department.

I'll save hard judgement of *Breath of Fire 3* for the final, however. I'm hoping to see better plot development deeper into the game, bigger spells, and better locations. Should I find these things, expect a glowing review...







LEARN THE SPECIAL SKILLS!!

When in Combat, your opponents will use many different 'Skills' against you. Using the Examine command, you can attempt to learn these skills while still in combat, in-effect stealing them off your foe. It will become your Skill for good, and is immediately entered into your Skills inventory list. You can even use it in the same battle, against the opponent you took it from! Use "Skill Ink" to share these skills with others in your party, if they can use it.







P PREVIEW | PlayStation

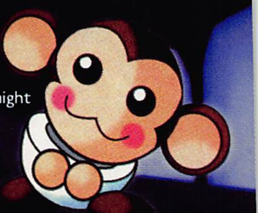
DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - MODERATE
AVAILABLE - 1st QUARTER 98



GLITCH
Breath of a thousand buffaloes?

Megaman Neo

Data, the so-called Save Monkey, delights children and GF editors of all ages. One look at the little dancing fellow reduces most to quivering piles of nonsensical, some might even say primordial, goo.



Finally, all you people who complain that Capcom keeps making the same *Megaman* game over and over can shut yer yaps. *Megaman Neo* is coming and should put to rest any accusations of complacency within Capcom's creative department.

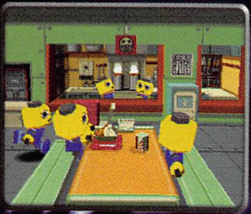
MM Neo throws you into a real time 3D adventure that's about as far removed from previous *Megaman* titles as can be, sporting an engine that renders characters to look as if they've been plucked straight out of an anime. The wide eyed, exaggerated mouth action is in full effect, and it's quite honestly unlike anything I've ever seen before. Capcom has tried something different here and it works beautifully.



The game itself has Megaman taking on all manner of 3D thrills, from exploring massive environments and dungeons to battling some of the most awesome looking polygonal bosses and enemies the PlayStation's ever seen . There is method to the madness of course, but story specifics and scenarios will wait for the final review.



I was completely shocked by *Megaman Neo*. My brief time with the early Japanese ROM literally floored me. I hadn't expected Capcom to make such a fun game out of the admittedly experimental notion of taking Megaman into the 3D world, but they have. Yes, this is only a preview, but expect nothing less than raves as soon as we are allowed to review a final. ***SD***



It's uncanny how successful Capcom were at creating what basically amounts to 3D anime characters. These incredibly well directed real-time cinemas are a highlight of the game.















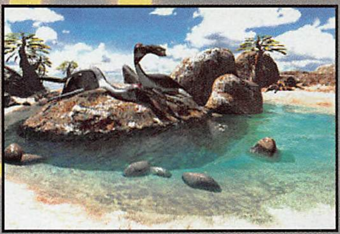
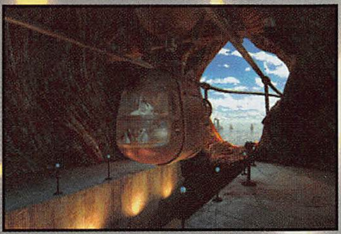


P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	DIFFICULTY - TBD
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - 2nd QTR 98

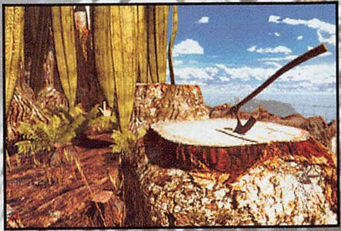


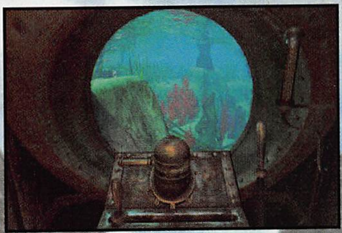
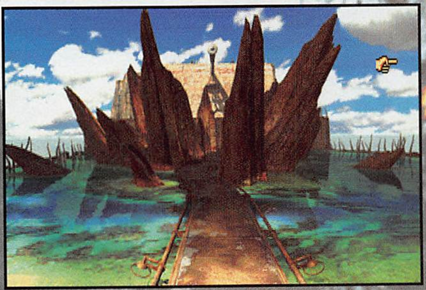
SUBSTANCE D
It's all about the save monkey!

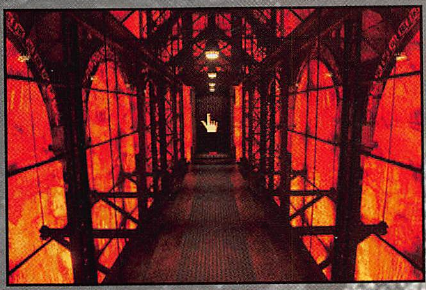





RIVEN
THE SEQUEL TO MYST



Point-and-click adventures seem to be somewhat of a dying breed, but with *Riven*, Cyan Productions hopes to rekindle a fire that once burned very brightly - for them at least. That's right, *Riven*, the sequel to *Myst*, is finally here (jump for joy...anyone?). Yeah, so *Myst* wasn't exactly the most popular game on the PlayStation, but on the PC it was a mega-hit. It attracted a whole range of 'non-gamers,' and in fact, it's still on the shelves at most PC game outlets; which is quite impressive given that it was originally released in '93. Wow, it has taken upwards of 4 years for Cyan to produce a sequel? Hmmm... Does that seem like a long wait to you?

Although *Riven* is not anything new or revolutionary, it certainly takes the original to new heights and should provide fans with many hours of wholesome fun. I stress the word 'many' because the game is huge. It spans across 5 discs (that's right - 5 discs!) and the puzzles are much more complex than those in *Myst*. The vastness and variety of each island alone is impressive and there are many puzzles; some are very straightforward while others are behemoths. At first, the game might even seem overwhelming to some, but give it some time and things will really begin to come together in a special way...

Don't expect anything Earth shattering when it comes to play mechanics. You know...point, click, point, click... You will find items now and then that you can pick up and use, but most of the time, it's just pointing and clicking. Not exactly exciting, but then again, *Riven* is not about fast-paced action-filled gameplay. It's about atmosphere, exploration, puzzle solving, and immersion (as was *Myst*). The very moment you begin to play *Riven*, you'll get caught up in its continual stream of mind-bending puzzles and its excellent sense of atmosphere. The rendered environments are even more impressive than *Myst's*, and there are now countless FMV sequences integrated into the backgrounds that really bring things to life. Water ripples, animals and people move about, flying insects flit through the air, and doors open with smooth authenticity. The game is also less linear than the first; providing for a great amount of freedom to roam from place to place without becoming stuck too often (although you will get stuck eventually).

I really liked *Myst*. I spent quite a bit of time with it when it first was released for the Macintosh and I had fun the whole way through. I enjoyed the excellent atmosphere generated by the rendered graphics, inspiring ambient sounds and music, and the puzzle solving theme. In essence, *Myst* was somewhat of a break from the normal video game for me. A game that required the use of my brain without the frenetic button mashing or combo madness. If you played *Myst*, and enjoyed it, then I doubt that *Riven* will disappoint. With 5 CDs packed with stunning environments, smoothly integrated CG, and sweet audio it is definitely worth a purchase - that is if this is your type of game. However, be warned that some of the puzzles will require quite a bit of brain-power to unravel, so put on those thinking caps (more like helmets here) and prepare to rack the noodley thing between your ears (your brain that is). ***SND***

R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CYAN	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - 5 CDS	AVAILABLE - NOW

?

STATION DAVE
An interactive postcard collection with extra puzzles!

"This is S.W.A.T. Hambleton radioing in from Raccoon City central! Them goshdarned varmints are aswarmin' across town, yes sirree bob! It's a veritable cacophony of corpse carnage as myself, a Rookie police officer known as Leon, and Chris' kid sister load up with piles of highly dangerous armaments, run about with giddy glee, and plant custom shotgun shell after shell into hideous leprous cadavers! Them there extra special guns came through; tell Chicago's Captain Springer that his efforts have paid off; ol' painless and myself have cleared the main street entirely of frothing apparitions! Well, this here butchery sure is tiring work... and I spy a donut shop! There's nothing like the smell of a strong black coffee after you've wiped the gore and entrails from ya fingers... and face! Okay Ernest, I'll have one sugar donut and a... Ernest? Hey Ernest!! You don't look so good! Holy heck, where's ya other arm?"

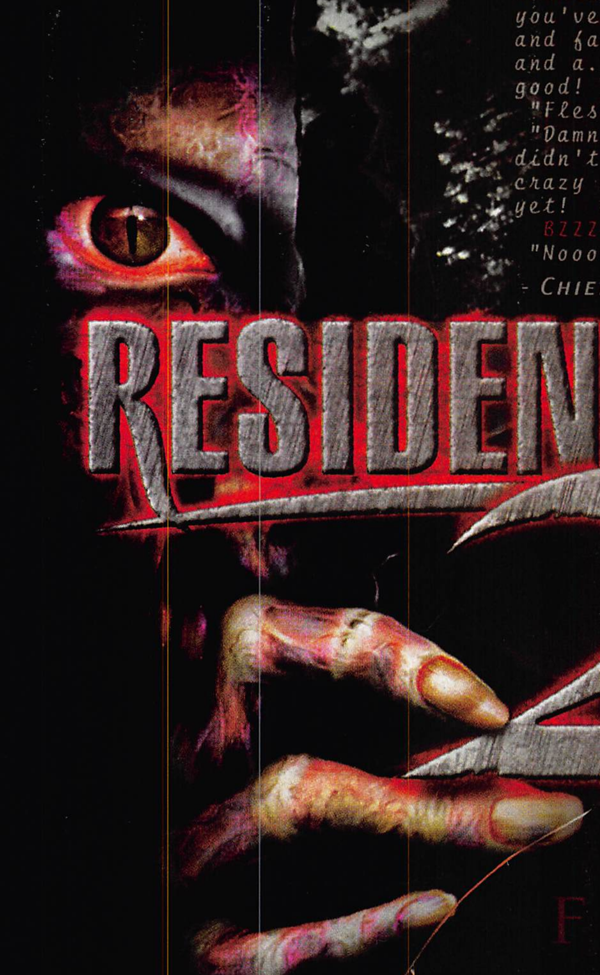
"Fleshy fleshy groooo!!"

"Damn, Ernest! Put your eye back in! Whoa! I didn't order a chainsaw with my meal! Hold back ya crazy fool! No wait...! Ma minigun ain't warmed up yet! Arrgghh!!"

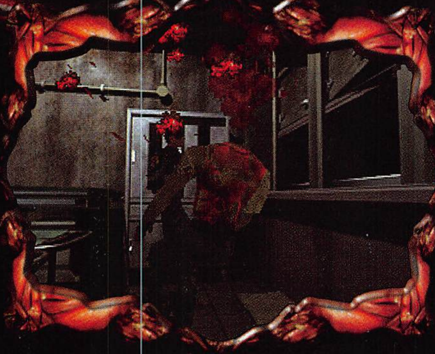
BZZZZZZZZZZ!!

"Noooo! <GLUK!!!>"

- CHIEF HAMBLETON. LAST RECORDED RADIO TRANSMISSION.



RESIDENT EVIL 2



FEEL EVIL





HEAR EVIL

Behold the best-selling PlayStation game of 1998. Yep, it may only be mid-December of the previous year, but I already know what every single PlayStation owner worth his or her salt is waiting for; another trek into survival horror! Those lucky enough to catch our previous issue may have uncovered six pages of rabid Hambleton madness regarding the preview copy of the game. Well, now we actually have final U.S. versions nestling in PlayStations throughout the G.F. offices, and as you can imagine; our fevered wait has more than been worth the sleepless nights and giddy anticipation. We're playing Resident Evil 2! At last! The only question remains; should you be? And of course, the answer to that question is a resounding and emphatic YES!!

Those seeking weathered prose regarding the startlingly lavish backgrounds and main game features should know what to expect (and should have read my ramblings last month); as this time I'm checking through the salient points which makes this much more than a mere video game, and more the work of genius. A full sackload of good points (plus a thimble full of bad ones) await you in this review, and after tearing apart this masterpiece of suspense and bowel-shuddering terror, you're hit with the realization that you're playing not just any old sequel, but perhaps the pinnacle of video gaming. No, this isn't a souped-up Alone in the Dark 4; this is a horrific and monstrous journey into the mouth of madness itself, a journey so enthralling, ghastly and addictive that you'll never experience such emotions again this year. Spectacularly grisly and superbly unique.

One experience the good folk at G.F. are still reeling from are the CG cinemas. Whoa, baby, are these gonna float your boats, people! Aside from intermixing the two characters with different introductions, the actual quality of the motion in all the characters is stunning. The truly broken endings from Street Fighter EX + Alpha are but a terrible memory, and the titanic crew of Namcoesque proportions have been drafted in to create the most stunning cut-scenes since Soul Blade's pirate galleons. People falls over and get munched. Zombies crumple, riddled with numerous bullet holes, and all with movement so real you'd swear you were there (if only the artifacts [which create a slight pixelly distortion] were lessened). A Raccoon City Police response vehicle is 'appropriated' and raced along the streets, and the effects are mind-blowing. A truck (complete with zombified driver) strikes a car, spins it out of the way, and careens forth. Prepare yourself folks, because the CG fun doesn't end there!











REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM
FORMAT - 2 CDs	AVAILABLE - NOW



HAMBLETON
"We have Hambleton down, I repeat, Hambleton is down!"

Evil Has Awoken



Later on, the complimentary scenes become all the more enthralling. Grin as two SWAT team members valiantly plug automatic gunfire into the hide of an advanced tyrant before receiving bloody justice. Guffaw as a Police Chief collapses in a heap of zombie body parts, shooting down his only chance of escape. And gawp at the realism of it all. We're talking Toy Story here! Vehicles are as real as you could hope for, and only the stiff mouth motions of the characters stall your suspension of disbelief. Those who shuddered with excitement at Tekken 2's introduction and waved their hands excitedly at Final Fantasy VII are going to be in CG heaven here. Now, if only Leon didn't look like Iggy Pop in the introduction, we'd have CG perfection...

The second installment of the Evil introduces a whole load of new characters, as all the folks from the first episode are either indisposed or splattered across a sewer wall somewhere. You've got those B-movie classic dialogues ("so (koff), you're the new guy, huh? guess the party was (splutter) canceled...") which add a little comic relief to the many hours of intense wandering that awaits, along with Ada Wong and Sherry Birkin to involve in a couple of wanderings. All this creeping horror (followed by fraught fighting and gore-filled death scenes) is complemented perfectly by a subtle, yet highly menacing music score. Marvelous evil ambient abounds throughout your trek.

Add to this some pretty involving puzzles, a couple of cool secrets (so far), rendered backdrops that keep on getting more and more impressive, two different ways through the game on each of the two discs and a 'zap' system (which means decisions in one game influences your next mission) and you've got an almost perfect explosion of intense gameplay, jaw-dropping graphics and gruesome visual eviscerations. Did I just write 'almost perfect'? Yeah, because there's a couple of minor problems. Firstly, there's no real 'hero' or 'heroine' to guide through the game. Leon and Claire are all fine and dandy, but they're not Heihachi Mishima or Lara Croft, are they? They just weren't... charismatic enough for me. More unfortunate still however, is the ease in which any competent gamer will complete this game...







Many thought the first Evil too difficult (not GameFan, I may add), and Capcom seem to have listened; there's a Rookie mode obscenely easy ("starting with 150 bullets? Okay!"), especially as this game's geared to those gamers over the age of 17... The regular mode? Expect to finish it in under three hours. Nope, not 25 or more like FF VII, but THREE hours. You can breeze through the 're-mix' of the game in around an hour-and-a-half, so be warned; enjoy every single rendered location! Of course there's the two characters (and remixed versions of their quests) to play through, but again, you'll be familiar with 95 percent of all the locations, and the main quests are always extremely similar (but with different main enemies and different item placement). Unfortunately, the final boss is also horribly easy to defeat, leading to a slightly unfulfilled conclusion to the game... and a few more tyrants wouldn't have gone amiss either.

However, when you stand flabbergasted at the whole package (two CDs!! CG cut scenes from beyond the stars! Backdrops so real your eyes hurt! Monstrous animation! A whole host of shambling critters and spectacular mutations only the insane could have created!), these quibblesome points are merely contestable hot air. Real fanatics are going to get weeks of enjoyment from this title, and as the game goes, video titles don't come more polished than this. Perhaps the months of anticipation had left it's mark; we never wanted this game to end! Take a week out of your schedule, lock yourself in an attic somewhere and play until your eyes and fingers bleed. A titanic trek into terror!

- Chief Hambleton R. I. P.

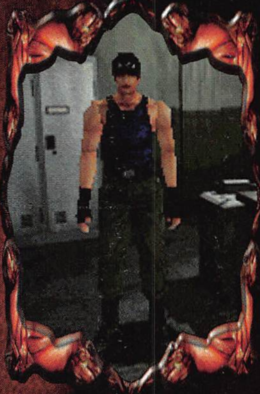




TERRIFYING ALTERNATE COSTUMES UNCOVERED!!

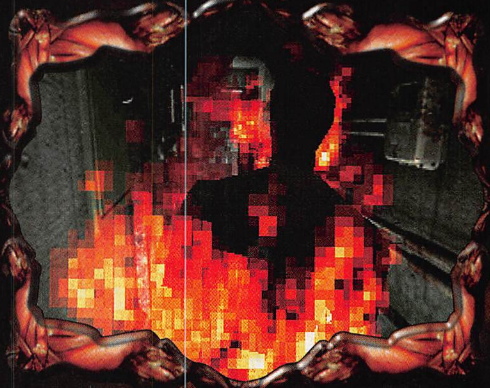
Found the helicopter pilot yet? And what about the fabled Tofu character (I kid you not)? This time around, Resident Evil fans have a little more in the way of secret areas and characters to uncover. Longevity is always a key issue in a game of this magnitude, and Capcom have thought long and hard on how to squeeze that extra hour of gaming time from your lives. What this essentially means, is that there's extra outfits for Leon and Claire (we're particularly taken with the Redfield cowgirl ensemble, complete with a six-shooter fired from the hip!), a couple of extra characters to locate for bonus goodies, and the usual array of outrageous weapons to uncover and use at your leisure. Ah, the hum of the minigun...

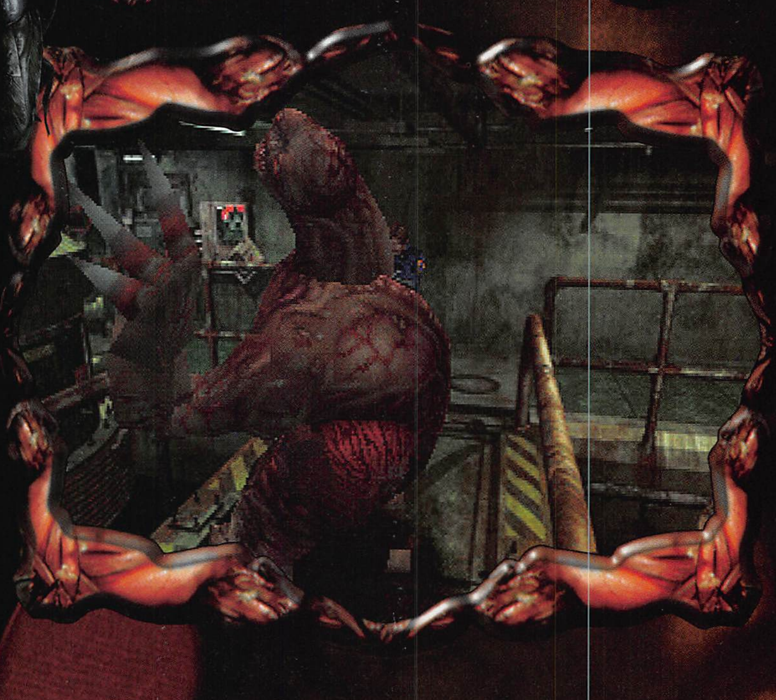
















DO YOU DO... CTHULHU?

We touched on the gibbering entities of the Resident Evil 2 world last issue, but after completing the game on numerous occasions, we thought we'd show you some rather fine and dandy 'other bosses'. Taking Umbrella genetic experiments and pouring G virus down their throats, there's a veritable Cthulhu mythos of jabbering and frothing flesh. Sure, you've got your 30 foot alligators and your various zombie types, but the real stars of the show lie waiting later into your trek. We were delighted with numerous real-time cut-scenes which included an infected victim's shoulder exploding into a huge mound of quivering flesh complete with a huge eyeball, a small facehugger type of 'thing', which mutated into a howling deviant not seen since the last John Carpenter movie, a couple of outrageously well animated Tyrants, and the real star of the show; the final abomination. This alligator/Yog-Sothoth cross-breed really epitomizes the splendor and graphical prowess on offer here. Shame it's so easy to kill...















Having played video games most of my life, I remember a Namco whose best efforts were spent on first-person shooters headed for the arcade and games like *Splatterhouse* and *Rolling Thunder*. You'd think I'd mention *Pacman* but sorry, I just never got around to it... there was always an *Asteroids* or *Tron* machine in close proximity... Anyway, all I'm trying to say is don't be shocked by *Klonoa*, because before *Tekken* (yes there was life before *Tekken*) Namco made a bunch of cool platformers and action adventures. This is their first notable polygonal one though, and at the same time it's their first foray into the *Sonic*-like little fury creature genre, one that can prove quite lucrative if done correctly which is sadly (more often than not) not the case. But this is Namco so I'll blow the whole bleedin' (how British!) thing right now by saying you could (could but shouldn't) stop reading right now and just go buy *Klonoa*, it's friggin' awesome!!

Now for those of you still with me,

R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO

PUBLISHER - NAMCO

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - 1ST Q. '98



E. STORM

GOD, I HOPE THERE'S MORE WHERE THIS CAME FROM!

Klonoa of the Wind: door to phantomile

Namco's Latest Miracle Is Indeed A Wonder





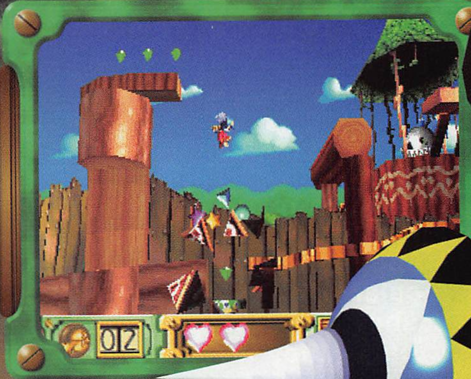



here's why. Let's start with the intro. Okay... okay, PS thumpy sound bite... yeah-yeah, the Namco logo... huh, wh- wh- wha- what's this?! Oh my Lord it's CG so completely amazing I'm going to soil my trousers!! The first time you see *Klonoa's* intro you may well cry. Get the picture? Good. Now, on with the game.

At its heart, *Klonoa* is a tried and true platformer filled with jumps and harder jumps, laced with obstacles and interactive enemies and at the end of every level (or in *Klonoa's* case "Visions") a massive guardian awaiting. With those basics as a foundation, and not the basis for the entire game (as so many developers would have you endure) we proceed. First, the jumping. Jumping, A simple enough task wouldn't you say? In *Klonoa* this simple maneuver is taken quite seriously as you must learn to grab, jump, and launch in sequence.

"GIVE ME 10 LIKE THIS A YEAR AND I'LL BE HAPPY 4-EVER!"









Bouts of second person 3D break up the platforming action. Klonoa must use his floppy ears keenly as well his judgement, or he could meet a spikey demise...





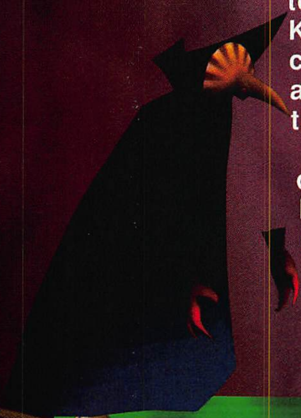


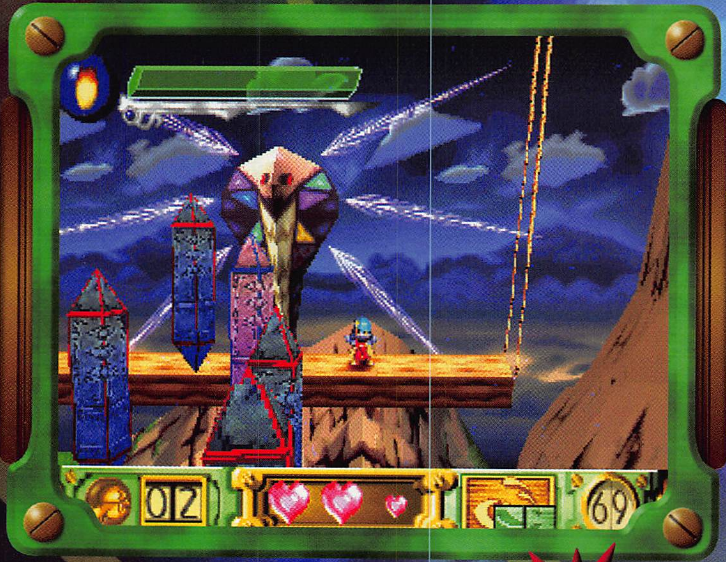




Klonoa grabs and lifts his bloated enemies overhead and then uses them for either target practice or to launch from in mid air. Klonoa's elephantile ears also allow him to hover and so eventually, you'll find yourself using various techniques in sequence to attain the harder-to-reach items and secret areas. Obstacles play a major role in the action as well. The level designers have done a spectacular job erecting polygonal pillars laced with moving parts and multiple layers as well as inner domains packed with puzzle elements. When it all comes together in vivid color at 60 fps, well, it's hard to describe how amazing Klonoa really is. It's as complete an overall package as the genre has seen thus far.

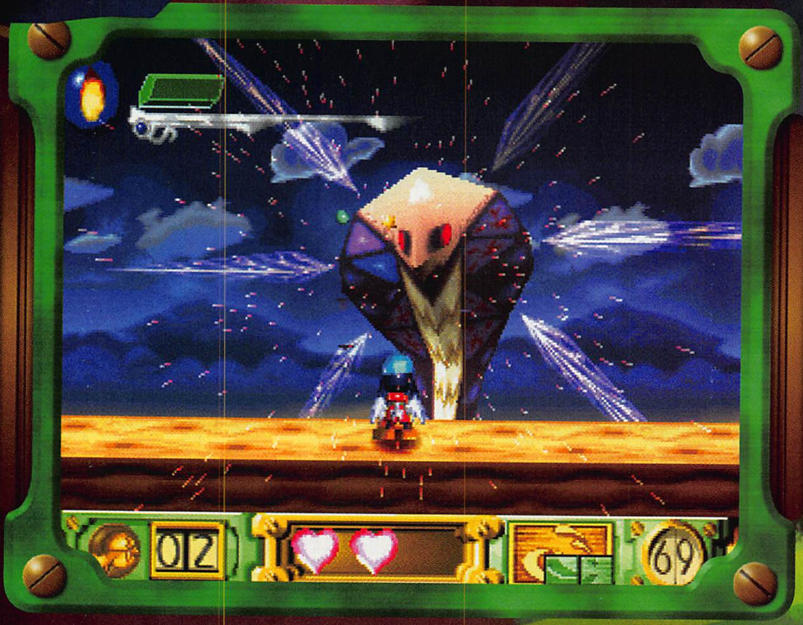
Besides the genius level design, much attention has been paid to the bosses as well. Appearing in either circular 3D or head-on as shown on the previous page, they are not only





"IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE HOW AMAZING KLONOA REALLY IS."







Monumental 3D boss fighting in a 2.5 D game at 60fps! It's powered by Namco and packed with furry fun for all ages. It just doesn't get any better.







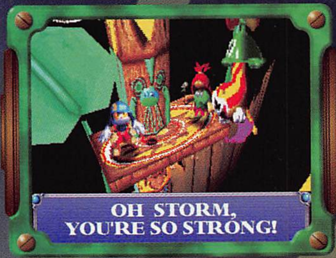






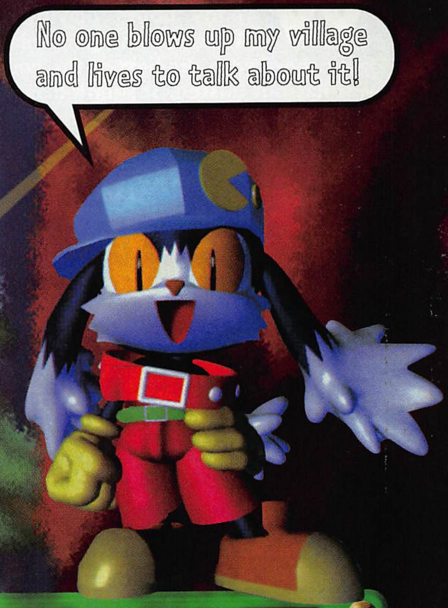




aesthetically wondrous but quite challenging as well, often exhibiting small weak points which *Klonoa* must breach one at a time, along the lines of those in *StarFox*. Musically too the game excels, pouring out appropriately cheerful or throbbing melodies depending on the situation at hand. The control is pinpoint accurate and the interaction with the game's inhabitants (though in Japanese presently) seems not only at home but quite whimsical as well. I can hardly wait to play Klonoa in English and uncover all of its secrets.

Klonoa: Door to Phantomile is a refreshingly brilliant looking and playing platformer riddled with multiple paths, objects to find and use, creative environments to explore, and endless play value. It is definitely one of those games that just feels right in your hands. I can't recommend it highly enough. Do come and see what else Namco are great at! And then we can begin praying for a sequel! ***ES***



















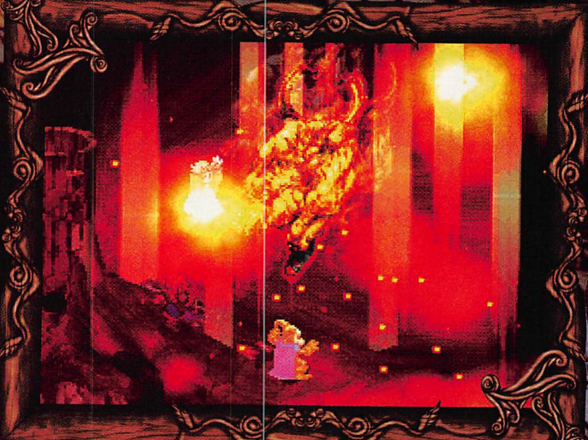
FINAL FANTASY TACTICS™



While doing the preview for *FF Tactics* and spending many, many hours playing this great game, I was torn: Although the gameplay itself was fantastic and right there with the best of the genre, the story itself was flat-out busted. It seemed as if it was translated by a random newcomer in the PR department with the newest edition of Webster's Japanese to Engrish Dictionary, rather than Square's usually ace localizers. The translation was shoddy, and most of the feeling of the story was lost with no hope of salvation—Waka had to be rushed to the nearest hospital after the initial shock. However, with the final rev it appears that Square pulled through and delivered a phenomenal translation with perhaps the single most serious storyline ever devoted to a domestically released RPG—for those that bemoan the fate of many a Japanese RPGs being lost amid a sea of bad jokes and intelligence insulting changes, this is just what the doctor ordered. In fact, it's as if Sony and Square even respect the intelligence of the English-speaking gamer and haven't mucked around with the story in any material way! I know, I'm in shock too!

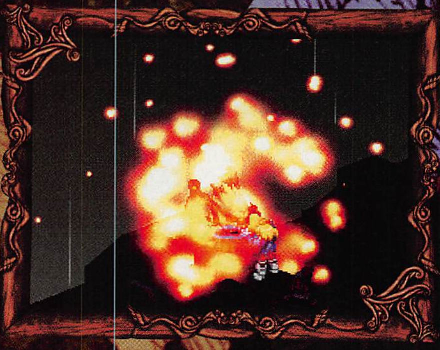
Generally speaking, strategy RPGs are not famous for their epic storylines; they usually takes a back seat to the turn-based combat. In this case, however, Square went all the way and crafted a scenario well beyond the dreams of most RPGs. Taking the role of Ramza, heir to the Beoulve name, you're a young tyro in the Hokuten Knights Corp. Disillusioned early on by inter-class strife that costs him the life of a loved one and a dear friend, he hits the mercenary trail. Embroiled in political turmoil, he is branded













a heretic by the church and has to discover the truth behind a massive plot to unseat the current ruling family and supplant it with a puppet government. Much of this goes on behind the scenes and is presented in a series of rousing vignettes showing the various goings on of the more shady characters. There are moments of joy: Ramza and Teta sharing a tender moment; sadness, as Ramza mours for his lost friend, Delita; and that's just the tip of the emotional iceberg; you will truly care for each character as the game reaches its climax.

Gameplay is reminisent of Quest's *Tactics Ogre*. Actually, this game IS *Tactics Ogre* with a different story and better graphics. Roam around the land of Ivalice, fighting battle after battle of strategic combat. Pick your units at







the outset and bring foes down by the blade or the awesome might of magic. Move your characters around the map with the typical 'movement squares' seen in every other strat RPG, attacking when in range and such. Nothing radically new, but it's all carried out incredibly well. In fact, the sheer number of character classes and options available may at first overwhelm. Fret not, however, as after some intimate time with the instruction manual and online tutorial all will be made clear

As for visual punch, well, you've never seen a strategy RPG that looked this fantastic. Each polygonal environment screams along at 60 FPS with intense spell effects and sprite-based characters. It's a match made in graphic heaven with none of the usual oil and water effect associated with mixing polys and sprites. Everything has that *Vandal Hearts*-like 'hand drawn but they're really textured polys' look taken to the extreme. The characters exhibit a huge range of emotions - everything from utter bliss to the depths of depression - it's quite remarkable actually, and goes to show that polys aren't the answer when it comes to the expression of emotion (at least not yet). Magic effects are stunning, with streamed summon spells approaching the power of *Final Fantasy VII* but at a much higher frame rate; 4X higher to be exact. It's probably the most graphically impressive RPG you'll see for many moons.

And while the graphics are quite beautiful, it's the music that truly steals the show. Featuring perhaps the single best implementation of PCM ever, it's a stirring orchestral score that rouses the emotions and carries you away on wings of light to lands of utter majesty (*Ed's Note: Thank you Mr. NY Times music critic*). I have no clue as to who composed it but whomever he (or she) is has the PS sound board hummin' like NEVER before. It's the first time I've ever been tempted to go out and purchase 'game music' which I normally abhor.

Amid all of this splendor, there are a few flies in the proverbial ointment. For starters, you can only have five characters in a party during any given battle. This means that if there are two NPCs (non-player characters, for those of you that managed to skip D&D in junior high, ya know those of you that had lives) you only get to select three characters. In *Ogre* you could have up to ten, and it does make battles somewhat more limiting—especially considering the enemy suffers from no such hindrance (armies of angry chocobos are the bane of my existence). Also, in order to preserve the extremely high frame rate, the environments themselves are much more limited than most other strat RPGs. *Vandal Hearts* and *Ogre* both feature much larger locales.



Whoa! Those two pages went by faster than Glitch through a six-pack... of Coke. Anyway, buy this the moment you lay eyes on it. Waka and I enjoyed it more than a certain other Square classic; and no, neither of us is mentally ill (well maybe Waka, but not me, no sir). Fifty hours and then some of gameplay await the stout of heart and sound of mind—this is not something you can afford to miss; noses or not... ***ECM***

P PREVIEW

PlayStation

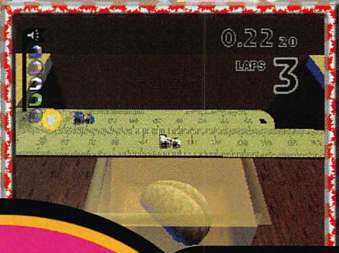
DEVELOPER - SQUARE
PUBLISHER - SCEA
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - MODERATE
AVAILABLE - NOW

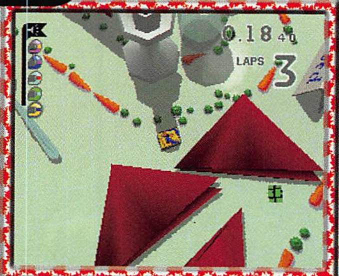


ECM
Better than FFVII? In my deranged opinion; YES!!




Micro Machines



Strolling into my cubicle one sunny Monday morning, I was alarmed to see three of GF's resident UK-spawned editors fighting tooth and nail over a particularly shiny new ROM. Doing what any level-headed American lad would when confronted with multiple raving Brits, I simply picked up the P/A and stated, "Fried foods and warm beer—all you can eat in the conference room". And as the last of the rabid rotten-tooths (well, so I hear anyway) stampeded from my cubicle in search of deep-fried manna and alcohol-induced euphoria, I finally had a chance to catch a glance at what all the ruckus was about: *Micro Machines V3*, developed by CodeMasters in the UK, and coming to the US under Midway's considerable auspices.

MM V3 (version 3?) is the latest in a long running line of top-down racers and the first for Sony's PS based on the popular US toy line. It came out about six months ago in the UK, and like all other *MM* games prior to it, sold in droves. And in this case, thankfully, it deserved to receive much of the acclaim and sales it garnered (unlike a certain *Rally* game, which shall remain nameless). And while it's a good one-player diversion, whole new dimensions of (dare I say it) bliss open up in multi-player mode. It would seem important to note, again, that Midway is the company responsible for bringing it across the pond. Bravo guys, more of these and less *MK* can only be a positive step towards admitting you have a problem (heh, heh. A joke).

This is played from a top-down perspective, with mini motors racing across various 'environments' such as pool tables, school desks, and a messy laboratory all the while trying to stay ahead of the three computer opponents out to end your quest for first place. While doing laps around the various tracks, pick-ups are scattered about that will increase speed, enable weapons (missiles, mines, etc.), and grant you the mallet of doom (a weapon that Thor would be proud to wield). And while it doesn't sound much different or better than countless racers from the past (don't mention *Rush Hour*), it's super-addicting and fun in the extreme.




While it's a good time killer for one player, it's the rabidly frothing clutches of the multi-player mode that will convince you of the utter playability of this (cliché time) 'gem'. The pleasure that you can derive from this game in such modes is

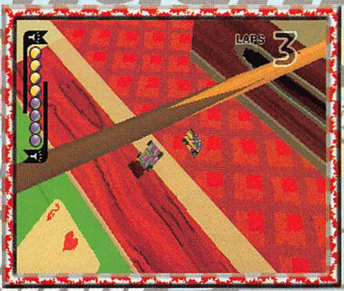
R REVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CODE MASTERS	# OF PLAYERS - 1-8
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY	DIFFICULTY - EASY
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - DECEMBER



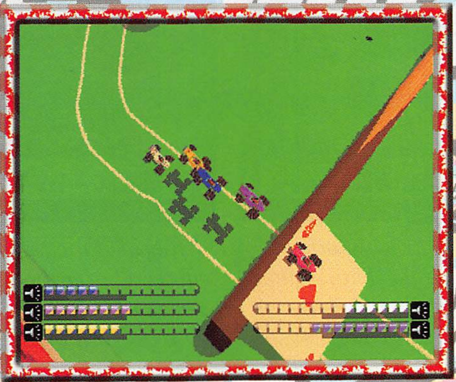
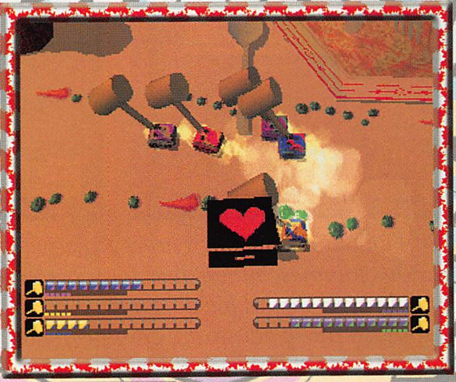
ECM
It would seem Midway has discovered a gem.







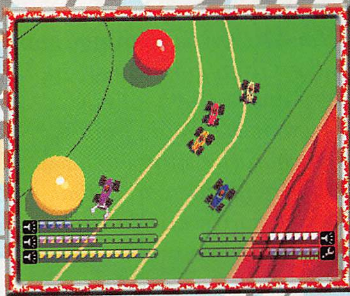


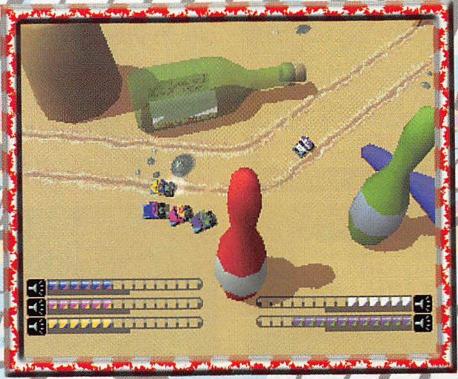
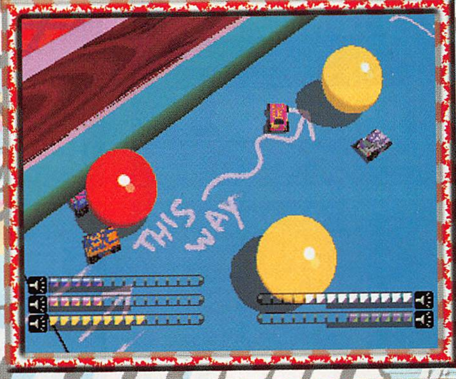



on par with such multi-player 'deities' as *Bomberman*, *Poy-Poy*, and *FirePro Wrestling*; it's that good. And what exactly is it about the multi-player game that makes it so enthralling? Well, instead of utilizing seperate screens for each of the up to eight (!) players, you're all on the screen at once; fall behind and it's over. This all makes for some insanely competitive action. Hell, a bunch of GF eds have been playing this game for nearly a fortnight, screaming and laughing the whole time and loving *every* minute of it. This even with *X-Men vs Street Fighter* having just arrived.

As for aesthetic value, well, it looks good but not fantastic. Each of the levels and vehicles are composed of texture-mapped polygons. And while it's all rather basic looking, there is some nice lighting here and there with non-stop, frantic action—the reflex-impaired may need to look elsewhere (*Myst* fans need not apply). The music is okay, but a little too cutesy and bouncy to be of any real value, although you won't be able to hear it over your friends yelling and screaming, thankfully.

So it looks like Midway could have a super-solid sleeper hit on their hands. Alas, I only say sleeper as really cool and unique games almost never get the notice they deserve. I just hope you folks out there in game land have enough foresight to know a good thing when ya see it. At the very least it would go a long way to showing Midway that we'll buy something that doesn't have gallons of blood flowing from every orifice. Yeah, I'd say this one's a keeper. ***ECM***







Tactics Ogre

LET US CLING TOGETHER











My first knowledge of Tactics Ogre was from seeing ads in various Japanese magazines for it's release on the PlayStation. I really liked the art for the game, and the girl shown in the ad reminded me of Alis from Phantasy Star for some odd reason. Later, I came to find out that Atlus was planning to release the game here in the US, and that peaked my interest even more (as Altus is one of my favorite third-party companies). I also thought that the game might be a good way to get into the strategy genre, a line of games that I had not really gotten into in the past save for a few select titles (such as Warsong). So my interested was raised when we received a "reviewable" copy of Tactics Ogre, freshly sent to us by Altus US. Ah, time to immerse myself in the war of a nation, to take my place as the head of a valiant rebellion for peace against the evil tyrant that threatens my home, to lead my valiant Metal Knights to victory and honor!

Tactics Ogre is a strange game, so far as the reception that it will get from gamers here in the US. The problem lies in that the game is 16-bit - it's on the PlayStation, but every aspect of the game is straight from the Super NES, from the graphics and character sprites to the music and sound effects. Actually, let me re-phrase part of that, because the game's non-PlayStation feel really isn't a "problem." I'm not one who demands fancy polygons or next-generation special effects all over the place (remember, I'm the Neo•Geo Freak of GF), but there are many people out there who do, and they may not give Ogre the look that it deserves because of this. This really shouldn't be a factor in your decision on whether to try the game, because a worthy game is a worthy game, no matter what system it is on (or seems to be on, in this case).

Getting to the game itself, Tactics is a good little strategy game. You sit down with it, you invest your time and patience in playing and building up your team, and you are rewarded with challenging battles and a good storyline to help move everything along. It covers all of the required strategy game aspects, rounding out a complete package, but it does always feel like they could have done a little more with the game (personally, I would have liked the option to add a little more personality to my generic troops). Also, the game occasionally suffers due to not being able to rotate the battlefields to get better views of hard to see characters (something that Final Fantasy Tactics, Ogre's 32-bit twin brother, thankfully has). However, Tactics Ogre has one big strong point that FFT can't claim; it has larger battlefields, and more characters per side (ten in Ogre versus five in FFT).

If you're not hung up on fancy graphics and Redbook music, and you're looking for a new strategy game to live out those dreams of causing the death of hordes of enemy troops, give Tactics Ogre a shot. It's a bit quaint by today's standards, but it's also quality, and worthy of some time well spent. **S**













LET US CLING TOGETHER

R REVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ARTDINK
PUBLISHER - ATLUS
FORMAT - CD

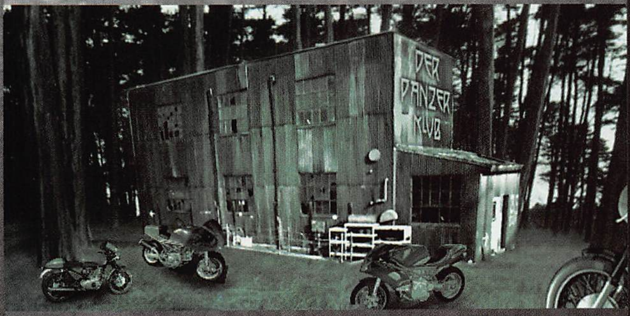
OF PLAYERS - 1 (2 KINDA)
DIFFICULTY - CHALLENGING
AVAILABLE - EARLY '98



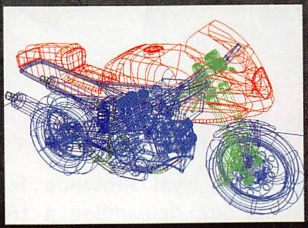
SHIDOSHIv2.0
Hey Sisteena... "let us cling together"... heh heh

· Road Rash 3D ·

EA · RACING · 2ND QTR '98



The first truly new *Road Rash* since the 3DO's popular version is on its way to PS. The so called *Road Rash 3D* features an all new engine, providing for more realistic physics and environments with much enhanced graphics, including actual motion captured bikes and riders. There will be four new gangs to battle and EA claims that more than 200 miles of racing environment will be in the game. Look for *Road Rash 3D* in the Spring of '98.





· Atari's Vol. 2 ·

MIDWAY · ARCADE CLASSIC · 1ST QTR. '98





Wonderful feeling! There's virtually no need to long for video gaming's past when we keep getting these arcade classics compilations. The latest edition of *Atari's Greatest Hits* includes a great selection of old favorites: *Marble Madness*, *Gauntlet*, *Crystal Castles*, *Paperboy*, *Road Blaster*, and *Millipede*. Those of you hankering for a heapin' hunk of old burning joy should definitely keep an eye peeled.



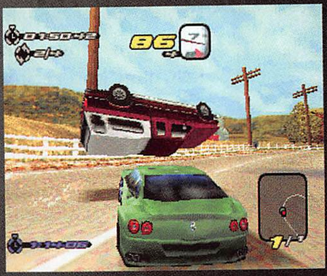


· Need For Speed 3 ·

EA · RACING · SPRING '98

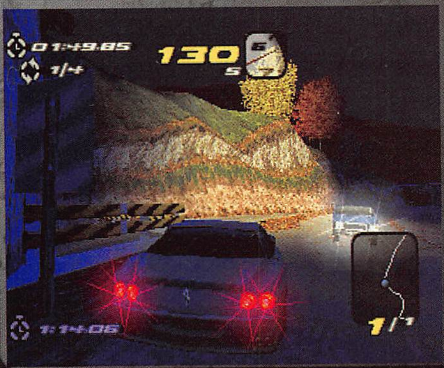


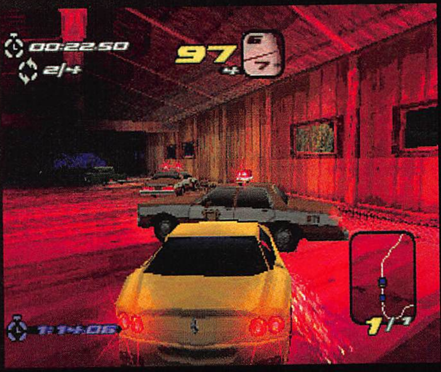


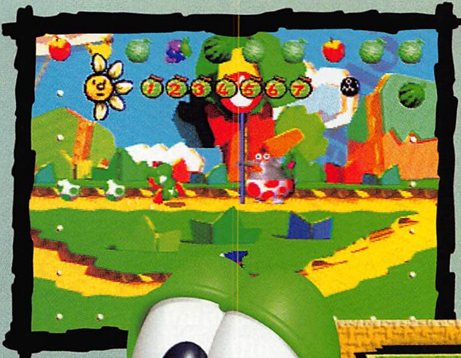




In near record time, Electronic Arts will be bringing you the latest in their highly successful line of *Need For Speed* games. *NFS III* will feature eight all new licensed cars, including a Ferrari 550 (pictured here), an Italdesign BMW Nazca C2, and a Lamborghini Diablo SV, with more cars to be added as development progresses, and will include new modes of play, including a pursuit mode, in which a team of law enforcement officials are hot on your arse and will stop at nothing to punish you for your speeding ways by setting up road blocks, laying spikes around, and tirelessly chasing you. Graphically, *NFS III* goes way beyond its predecessor with some incredible light sourcing (the working headlights are impressive to say the least) and highly detailed streamed environments. Look for *NFS III* in or around March of 1998.













Yoshi's

2D platforming wonder from Miyamoto!!!





All is not well on Yoshi's Island. The Marvelous Tree of Mirth has been stolen by Baby Bowser, weakening all the Yoshis, and allowing Bowser to lock the entire world in a magical picture book. However, at a remote edge of the island, six baby Yoshis have hatched a plan. By eating as much fruit as possible, they believe they will be filled with happiness. Once happy, they can move through the book to the last page and reclaim the Marvelous Tree of Mirth, thus returning the island to its normal state. Hey, at least it makes a change from the usual 'kidnapped princess' riff.

Yoshi's Story is a very special game. More special than perhaps many of you may at first realize. It is not just the sequel to Yoshi's Island (although that in itself is cause for celebration). It is the first N64 2D offering to be overseen by Shigeru Miyamoto—the creator of the 2D platform genre as we know it. In his lifetime, Mr. Miyamoto has 'forgotten' more about designing 2D platform games than you or I will ever know, and his track record in this area is simply without equal in the history of video games. He has since gone on to make equal innovations in the world of 3D design, but that hasn't stopped legions of loyal Nintendo fans from requesting, nay, demanding a true 64-bit 2D platformer from the godfather of the genre. And with Yoshi's Story that's exactly what they've got.

The first thing you'll notice when you fire up Yoshi's Story are the aesthetics. Yoshi's Story looks like you'd expect a 64-bit 2D game to look like—incredible. Forget any visions you may be having of Mischief Makers (which I still love), this is the real deal. The rendered characters move with an uncanny degree of fluidity, particularly Yoshi, and the backgrounds (which range from papier mâché to a cross-stitch quilt) are both imaginative and visually stunning. The leather jungle is particularly impressive, with amazing reflections on the water surface and beams of light dancing around underneath. The sound effects are typically appropriate (I love the padding sound of Yoshi's feet as he runs), while the music is... well it's a little strange. Most of the tunes are cute and catchy, but some are just plain weird (like the one's involving a 'rap' in Yoshi's native language) and the level completion song may be just a tad too saccharine for its own good, especially since you can't skip it.

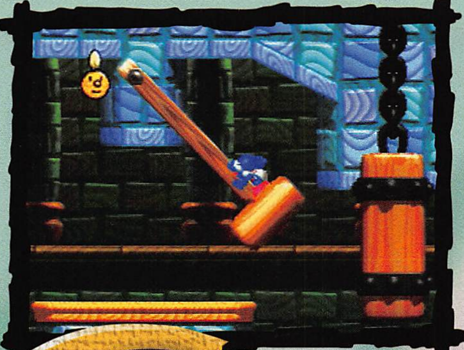
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P PREVIEW | **NINTENDO 64**

DEVELOPER - NINTENDO	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	DIFFICULTY - HARD
FORMAT - CART	AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



KNIGHTMARE Incredible 2D gaming... with extra sugar on top!





STORY™

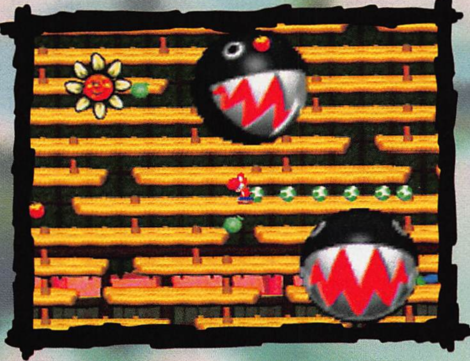


Controlling Yoshi





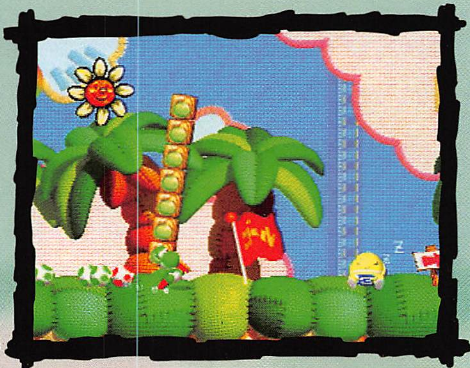

Basic control of Yoshi is achieved with the analog stick. Push it a little way and he will walk. Push it to its extremities and he will run. Press A to jump and B to eat fruit or enemies with Yoshi's tongue. Pressing A a second time while Yoshi is in the air will cause Yoshi to 'flutter jump'—he kicks his legs as fast as he can and gains extra height. Press down on the stick while Yoshi is in the air and he will hip-dive to the ground, similar to Mario's butt-stomp in Mario 64.











But pretty graphics have never been the selling point of Miyamoto's 2D epics. His trademark is tight control and innovative play mechanics, and as you might expect, Yoshi's Story has both in spades. From the very first level it's apparent that Yoshi's Story isn't like any previous 2D action game you've ever played. It may retain certain key features of a traditional platformer (left to right scrolling, jumping, etc.) but the structure and implementation are totally original. For a start, Yoshi is controlled with the N64 pad's analog stick (no d-pad support). And it's not just some gimmick—the game actually requires that you make full use of Yoshi's ability to creep, walk and run at different points. It may seem a bit imprecise at first, but after a while it becomes second nature, and going back to d-pad control on a game like Mischief Makers feels incredibly limiting.



Take aim... 1



Egg-streme Action!

By eating an enemy or head bopping one of the many green and white boxes dotted around the levels, Yoshi will obtain an egg. Yoshi uses the eggs as ammunition and can carry up to six at any one time. By pressing and holding the Z trigger a cursor appears on the screen. Position the icon where you want Yoshi to throw the egg and release the button. Eggs are used to either defeat enemies or pop bubbles containing fruit and items.

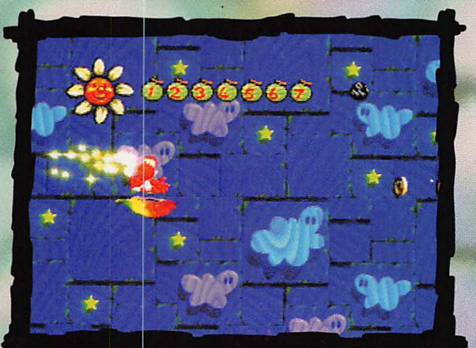


...and fire! 2

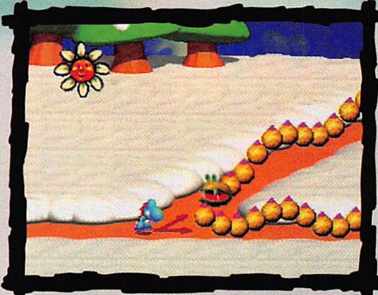




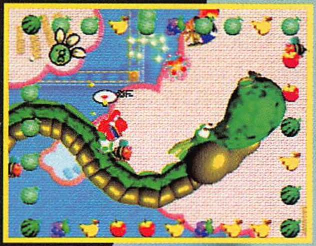






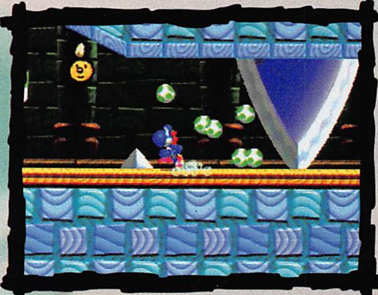
Be a Melon Farmer!



Yoshis love fruit. It's what makes them happy. However, some fruit is tastier than others. Every time you turn on your N64, the CPU will randomly pick a fruit type as the 'lucky fruit' of the day. That fruit will then be worth more than all the regular fruits until you turn the machine off. But that's not all. Different colored Yoshis have different favorite fruits, which give them back more 'happiness' (life) than the other fruits. However, the best fruit of all are the melons. There are exactly 30 melons on each stage (most of which are hidden) and to perfect that level you must collect them all.







However, perhaps the most innovative feature of all is the game's structure. Yoshi's Story is not a simple trek from left to right, or a linear progression through levels like most platform games. In fact, in this department it's more like Starfox 64. You start from the beginning each new go and, like Starfox 64, the ultimate goal is to obtain as high a score as possible. To complete an individual level Yoshi must eat 30 pieces of fruit, but in the process there are all kinds of ways to score points. Overall, there are a total of 24 levels (spread over six 'pages'), but you can only ever play through 6 of them in a single 'go'. It's up to you to locate the giant hearts hidden around each level (which open up worlds on the next 'page') and plot your course through the stages you feel will reward you with the highest score.

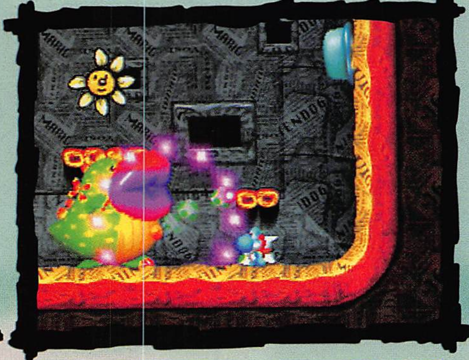
"...wonderfully original and completely intuitive."







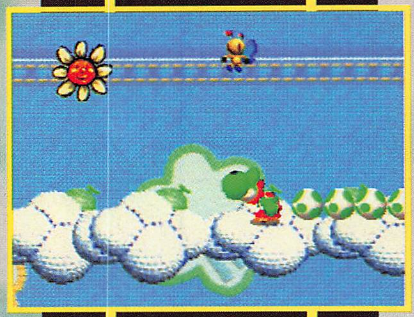


This is a totally new approach to platform games (for me at least) and while 24 levels may not seem like a lot, they are designed in such a way as to bear repeated play. This is not some quest to explore and conquer as many levels as possible (like Super Mario World)—this is a much more focused, competitive, affair. Beating a level is easy. Perfecting it (i.e. consistently collecting 30 melons) is another matter entirely.

Nintendo says they plan on making some changes to Yoshi's Story for its American release, but to be honest I really couldn't see anything that needed changing (except maybe that end level song). Miyamoto has done it again, producing yet another 2D masterpiece that is both wonderfully original and completely intuitive. The N64 is a system of vast 2D power, and my feeling is that Yoshi's Story is only scratching the surface. *K*




Sniff.. Sniff Around

By pressing R at any time the screen will zoom in and Yoshi will sniff the surrounding area. If he smells any secrets he will let you know, and by gauging his reaction it is possible to pin-point the exact location of any hidden items. Once you are on the right spot, simply hip-drop the ground to reveal the item! There are plenty of secrets in Yoshi's Story, including a 'hidden' colored Yoshi.





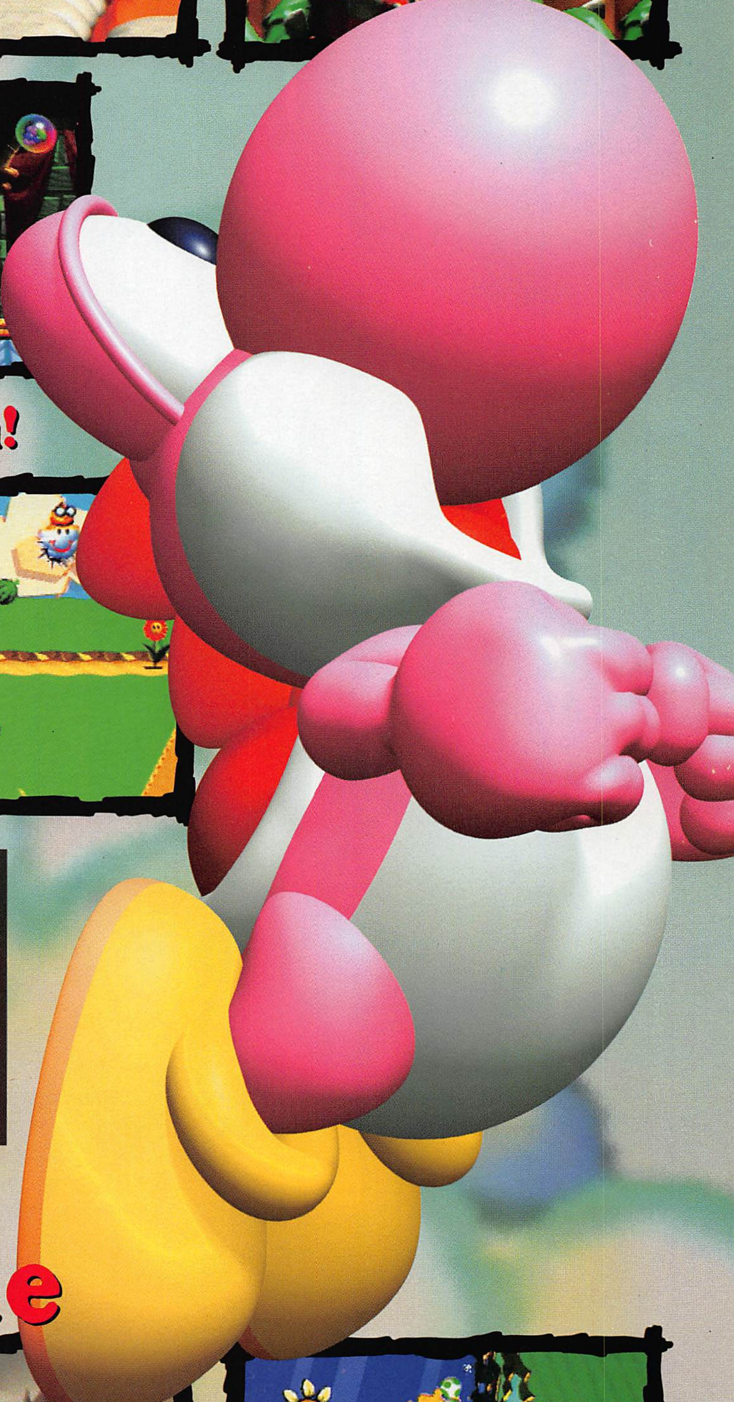






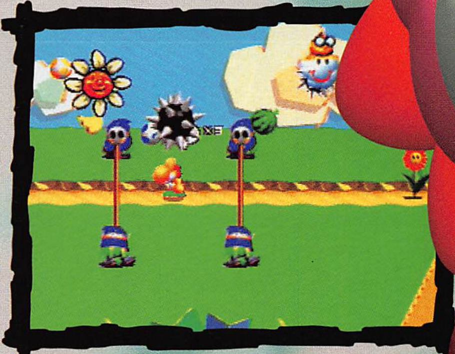






Miyamoto has done it again!



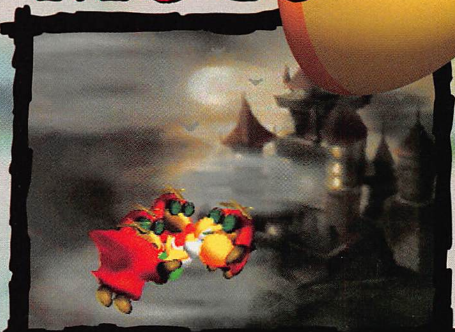


Once a level has been beaten in Story Mode, it becomes available for instant play in Trial Mode. Trial Mode is good for practicing the tougher stages and for finding out where all 30 of the melons are hidden. Individual high scores are stored and the top five for each level are displayed.

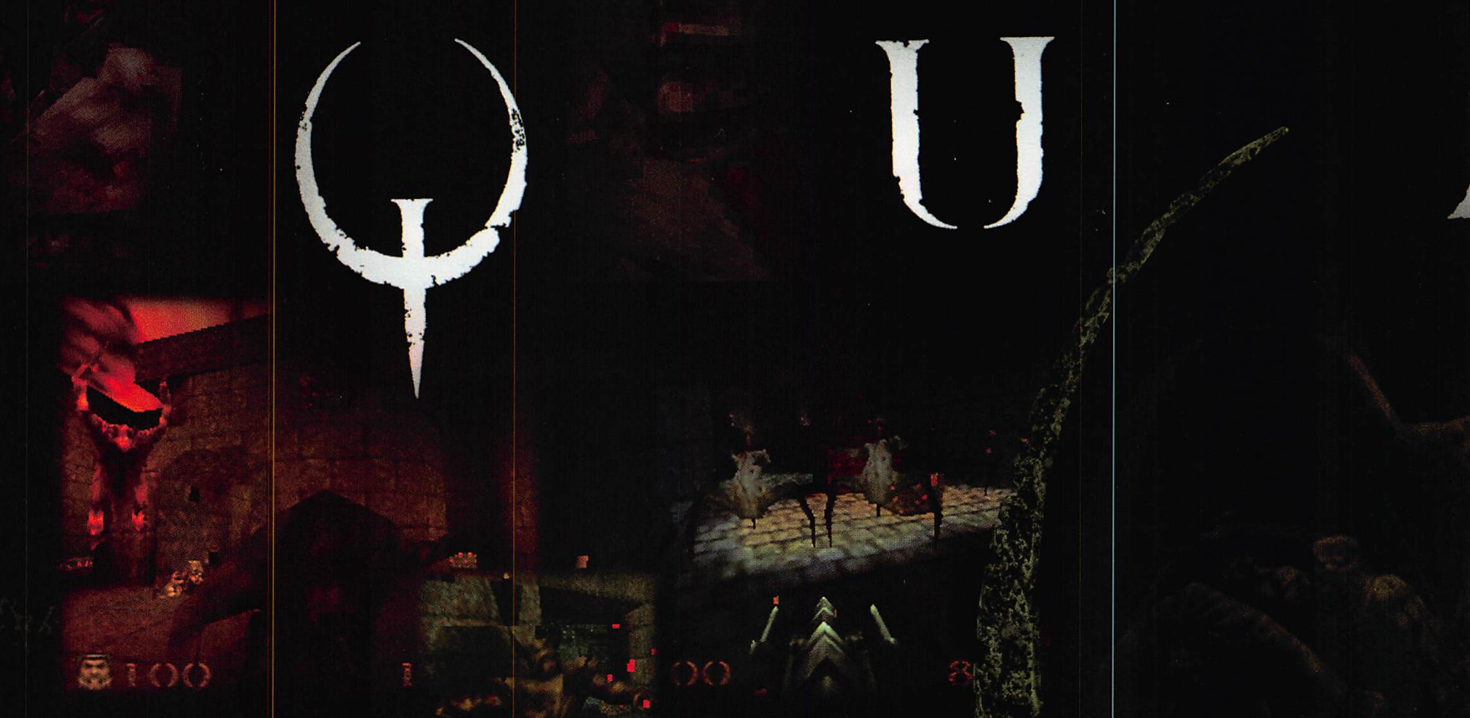


Trial Mode









From the team that brought you the really very good *Doom 64*, comes *Quake 64*; a port of id software's super successful follow up to the *Doom* series. Although *Quake* has recently been superseded on the PC by it's superior sequel *Quake 2*, there is no denying that *Quake* is still an amazing game, particularly in multiplayer mode. And now N64 owners are going to have the chance to find out for themselves.

QUAKE 64

When *Quake* was released in 1996, 3D accelerator cards had yet to be accepted as an essential component of a games playing PC. *Quake's* graphics were produced in software, and without an extremely powerful PC the best resolution you could hope to run it at was 320x240. However, as 3D cards became more accepted (thanks in no small part to 3DFX and their voodoo graphics chipset), a 3D accelerated version of *Quake* became available that ran at much higher resolutions (and frame rates!) and utilized the advanced graphical features of the 3D cards. It was called *GL Quake* (named after the Glide API) and it almost single-handedly brought about the 3D card revolution in the PC gaming world.

The reason I'm telling you all this is because in their creation of *Quake 64*, Midway set their goals on reproducing the graphical delights of *GL Quake*, as opposed to the regular software version of *Quake* (which is what *Saturn Quake* looks like). And to their credit, they have pretty much succeeded! The resolution may be a little lower, and the frame rate may occasionally stutter, but otherwise this a fantastic translation of a game that would normally take a $1500 PC (with 3D acceleration!) to run.

P PREVIEW | NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - iD/MIDWAY
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY
FORMAT - CART
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - NAILS
AVAILABLE - MARCH



KNIGHTMARE
A page of the finest green! And a *GL Quake* emulator!





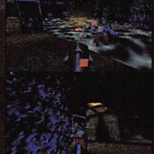
On the game side, Midway have opted for a straight port of *Quake*, with all of the PC's levels from all four episodes plus seven DM maps for the two player mode (see box-out). After the amazing new levels seen in *Doom64* this comes as something of a disappointment, but I guess if you've never played *Quake* before (as most N64 owners probably won't) then it really won't matter. Like the Saturn version, some of the level's have undergone minor surgery to make them run a bit smoother, but the experience is still intact.

The sound effects are all taken directly from the PC code, and the music (which wasn't in this version) is said to be even creepier than *Doom 64:* although that does mean N64 owners are missing out on Trent Reznor's excellent redbook audio. Control with the N64 pad is totally customizable (I prefer the *Turok* style set-up) and is probably the best you're going to get this side of a mouse. We'll see how the final product shapes up when we review *Quake 64* next issue. See you then. **K**















DEATHMATCH!

While the Saturn version of *Quake* was an excellent translation, it was missing the most important facet of the *Quake* experience - Deathmatch! *Quake 64* was originally not going to have a multiplayer mode, but after listening to the outraged cries of gamers and journalists everywhere, Midway decided to delay the release and add a split screen two player mode. Was it worth it? Hell yeah! The screen may be a little letterboxed, and the frame rate may be slightly lower, but there's nothing like hunting down a human opponent to get the blood flowing. Midway have included all six of id's original deathmatch levels along with one extra war ground.















As I continue my harsh and wearying trek through 3D fighter hell, it occurred to me that most of the fighters of this ilk on N64 have been at best (and this is being generous) average. The field is wide open for anyone capable of creating a slightly-better-than-mediocre brawler for Nintendo's 'With hardware like this, why don't we have a rippin' fighting game?' console. Well, it took a while, but it seems that Ocean may be moving in the right direction with this recent acquisition from eternally busy developer, Genki. *Fighter's Destiny* is the name, and it's shaping up to be the best 3D fighter on N64 yet.

Fighters Destiny

When it comes right down to it, how can it possibly be that ALL of the current 3D fighters on N64 have been pretty lackluster? In fact, that's putting it mildly. Some have good graphics (*Mace*, *Dark Rift*) but none seem to have anything near acceptable play. This seems to have been the highest priority for Genki. While our preview copy won't make games like *Tekken 2* and *Fighters Megamix* on those 'other' systems sweat, it certainly looks like it's going to take top honors in the gameplay-impaired world of N64 fighters. Gameplay itself is even <gasp> slightly original.

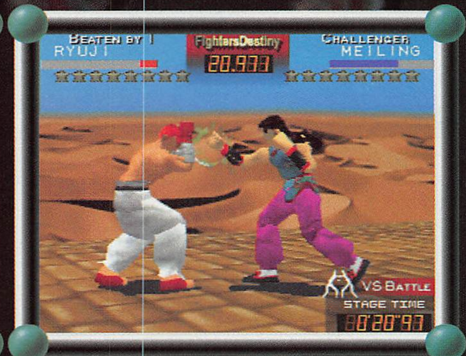
The whole system is based on a point scale for varying types of attacks and blows. For instance, throws result in 3 points out of 7 counting towards a victory. After each score the game sets opponents back with full life bars and again you go about trying to earn more points. And yes, you can run out of life, at which point you're dizzied and open to any sort of take down. It's original and a nice twist on an extremely worn genre; I have ruts in my systems from these games.



We'll be back with a full review come February (hopefully) so tune in then to get the full scoop. As it stands, you can take my word on it that it already has the other N64 fighters hanging their heads in shame. Not a graphic marvel by any means, but a good solid game nonetheless. ***ECM***







P PREVIEW | NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - GENKI
PUBLISHER - OCEAN
FORMAT - CARTRIDGE
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - JANUARY '98



ECM
Better than *WarGods*!

· Aero Gauge ·

ASCII · RACING · 1ST QTR '98





There seems to be a dearth of games in every N64 category save for racing. Now, Ascii's *Aero Gauge* joins the growing list, this one to be filed under "futuristic racing." Presenting the player with a selection of high performance hover-vehicles, *Aero Gauge* attempts to go *Extreme G* one better by allowing substantial vertical movement throughout the courses. You guide the craft as much up and down as you do left and right. A variety of selectable vehicles (each with unique handling properties) and an ample amount of twisting, undulating courses should add up to Rambone size intensity. Currently available in Japan, *Aero Gauge* should be hitting our continent soon.



· Tonic Trouble ·

UBISOFT · 3D ACTION/ADVENTURE · SPRING '98





The talented creators of *Rayman* return with their stab at a 3D action/adventure game with the forthcoming *Tonic Trouble.* Starring a purple alien called Ed, *Tonic Trouble* features an all new 3D engine and integration tool which allows for unprecedented behavior and expression from the game's characters. UbiSoft reportedly spent 18 months and four million dollars developing this technology and the end result should be impressive. With 10 fully 3D worlds and over forty unique characters, *Tonic Trouble* promises plenty of 3D thrills. Look for the N64 version 'round about April '98.





· Mystical Ninja ·

KONAMI · 3D ACTION/ADVENTURE · EARLY '98







Konami's 64-bit update of *Legend of the Mystical Ninja* is officially on its way to our shores. Having been available in Japan for months as *Goemon*, American gamers will finally get a crack at this unique 3D adventure. With massive *Mario*-esque environments, four different player characters (including Ebisumaru from the 16-bit original), and gobs of gameplay variety, *Mystical Ninja* is more than just another free-roaming 3D adventure game. And it's coming your way in March 1998.

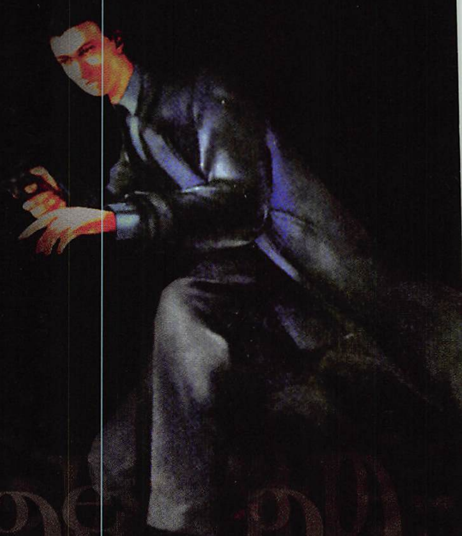








One of the finest arcade games of recent times is finally getting a conversion to the Saturn. House of the Dead blew the public away, when it was first released, because it featured some of the smoothest graphics and play mechanics yet seen in an arcade light-gun game. The plot consists of one or two investigators, looking into a bizarre series of spooky events, at an old haunted mansion. Typically, a cute girl has been abducted by an evil scientist, and the players must blast their way through many different locations in and around the house. Baddies include some truly gruesome undead creatures, including chainsaw-wielding zombies, rotting guard dogs, mermen, bats and foul maggots.



HOUSE OF THE DEAD

House of the Dead is a colossal gore-festival, with your guns blazing you must rip chunks of flesh from the undead hordes. This is one very intense, adrenaline packed game, and there are plenty of pant-wetting moments, as your investigator slinks round darkened corridors, and explores many different rooms and scenarios. The path of progress available to the player, depends greatly on which baddies and/or which doors you select. There are multiple routes to take, but all of them have their own nasty surprises in store.



BLOODY SEQUENCES



THE HOUSE OF

Shoot and dismember hordes of the undead with the pull of your trigger!!

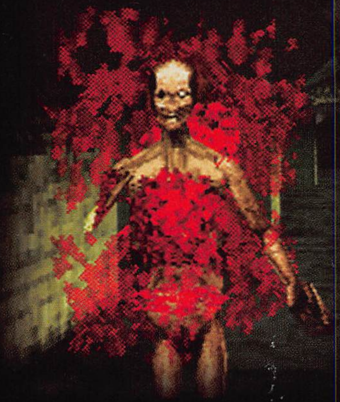






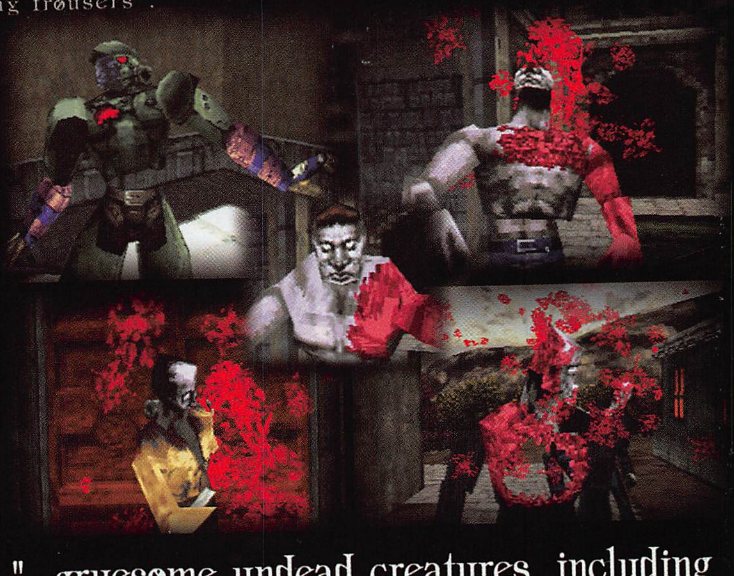

"House of the Dead is a colossal gore-festival, with your guns blazing chunks of flesh from the undead hordes...a very intense, adrenaline packed game..."






Now to the Saturn version. Many people thought Sega would wait for the release of their next
super-console, before converting House of the Dead, but the Saturn has been graced with it s own
incarnation. It plays and feels very much like Virtua Cop II, which is no bad thing, as you already
know. Yeah, there are differences to the arcade version, but you would have to pretty dumb, to
expect an arcade perfect conversion. As it stands, House of the Dead is an awesome conversion, and
will provide avid gamers with many hours of gore-filled shooting fun. Now then if I could just
confront that mecha-demon without filling my trousers .

THE DEAD



"....gruesome undead creatures, including chainsaw-wielding zombies, rotting guard dogs, mermen, bats and foul maggots."

P PREVIEW	SEGA SATURN
DEVELOPER - SEGA	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - HARD
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SPRING '98



DAS TOTAL GUVNOR
Mmmmmm... beefy!! More zombie offal for me, please!

THE 'MARVEL' SERIES

X-Men Vs Street Fighter is a conversion of the popular coin-op of the same name, one of Capcom's many Marvel Comics-licensed 2D fighters that include *X-Men: Children of the Atom*, *Marvel Super Heroes*, *Marvel Super Heroes Vs Street Fighter* and most recently *Marvel Vs Capcom*. The premise of the 'Marvel' series is simple: take the basic gameplay of *Street Fighter 2*, simplify it, add Marvel characters, and then blow the whole thing through the roof with blistering speed, spectacular special moves, excessive mid-air battles, and insane combos that make *Killer Instinct* look positively tame. The coin-ops have been successful in both Japan and America (a rarity these days) and have already produced two impressive (albeit flawed) Saturn conversions - *X-Men: COTA* and *Marvel Super Heroes*.

THE STORY

Some of the world's top martial artists and mutant super heroes have been mysteriously disappearing. Is this an act of Shadowloo terrorism perpetrated by the sinister Vega (M. Bison), or another scheme of Magneto, the most dangerous mutant on earth and enemy of the X-Men? To discover the truth, the X-Men and Street Fighters have teamed up in various different partnerships to locate their missing comrades and kick the ass of whoever is responsible. Yeah, it's a pretty weak story, and everyone knows that the Street Fighters would never last in a *real* battle against the X-Men, but to be honest, who cares?!



X-MEN VS STREET FIGHTER



THE CONVERSION

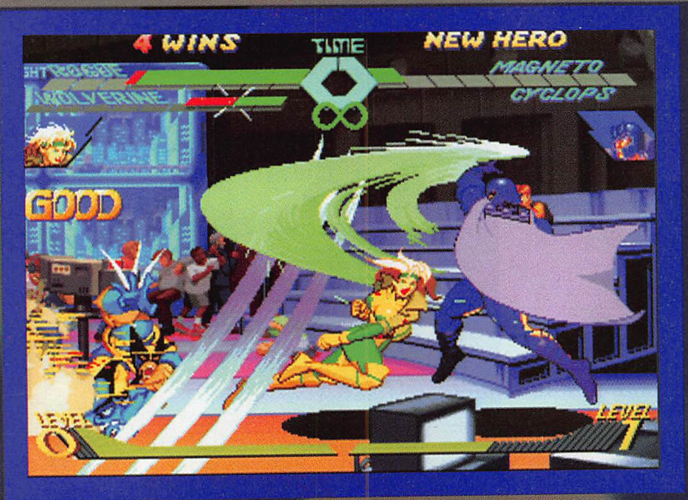
While *X-Men: COTA* and *MSH* were both excellent conversions of their respective arcade counterparts, they weren't perfect. Although the gameplay was all there, a loss of animation (particularly in *X-Men*), poor quality sound effects and long loading times destroyed the illusion of having the coin-op at own home. *X-Men Vs SF* on the other hand suffers from no such limitations. Utilizing the much vaunted 4 megabyte RAM cart peripheral, Capcom have delivered literally a 100% accurate conversion of the coin-op. Can 4 megs of RAM really make that much difference? In a word, yes.

First and foremost, the graphics are identical. And I don't mean 'nearly' identical, I mean IDENTICAL. Every last frame of animation for every character is here. Every block mark, every idle, every spark of every super - all here. It's truly a sight to behold. Look at these shots, then imagine them moving with unprecedented fluidity. I still can't believe it. Just watching these characters walk forwards and backwards, without even fighting, is a revelation. The backgrounds are also spot on, with the possible exception of some missing images in the TV studio backdrop (kindly pointed out to me by Nick Rox - not that he's anal like that or anything).

Secondly, there is none of the slow down that plagued *MSH*, no matter which characters you pick or what background you fight on. In fact, you even have the option to pump up the game speed to practically unplayable velocities. Four Juggernauts at once on turbo eight setting? No problem! Just get ready for some serious blisters!

Thirdly, the sound effects are crystal clear. I know this is only a small point, but for once in a Saturn fighting game it's nice to be able to hear all the hits and speech without the usual Saturn deterioration. Another bonus of having all that extra RAM? You betcha!

Finally, and perhaps most astonishing of all (considering the above three points) the game features almost instantaneous loading. The actual 'loading' screen is up for about the same amount of time as the coin-op (i.e. two to three seconds) and in that time the game loads in all four characters plus the background! How can this be?! To be quite honest, I haven't a clue. Answers on a postcard please...

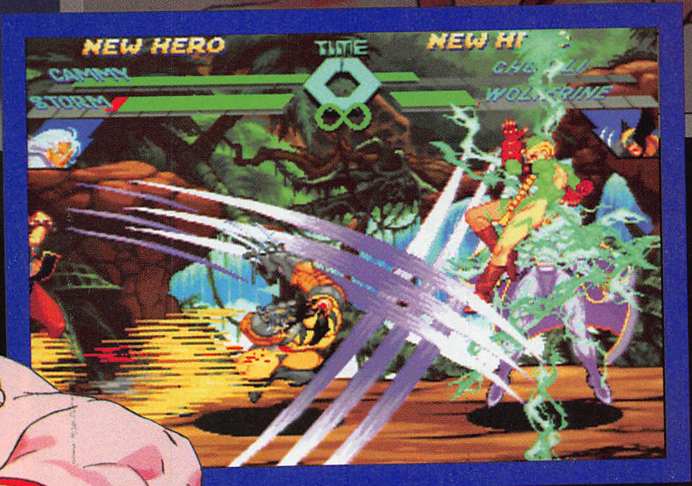


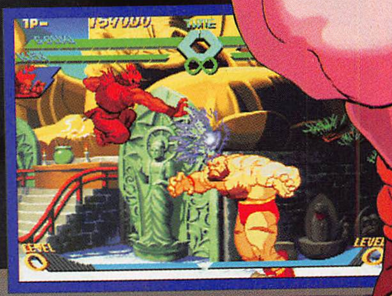
THE GAMEPLAY...

Of course, the greatest conversion in the world doesn't mean squat if the coin-op original wasn't up to scratch in the first place, but thankfully, that's not the case here. Picking up where *MSH* left off, *X-Men Vs SF* features all the lightening paced, over-the-top, trademark Capcom action of *MSH* (including infinite combos and aerial raves) but adds an awesome new twist to the formula- namely, the ability to fight with two different characters simultaneously, tag team style. Choosing effective team combinations and managing your fighters efficiently during battle adds an element of strategy to the regular scrapping action (an element that was otherwise lacking from *X-Men* and *MSH*) and makes for some truly varied and spectacular bouts.

"...lightning paced, over-the-top, trademark Capcom action!"







CONCLUSION

Overall, *X-Men Vs SF* is a ground breaking conversion of a really fun coin-op that will please both Capcom fanatics and casual gamers alike Personally, I miss some of the *MSH* characters (Spiderman, Hulk, Dr. Doom) but for a translation of this quality I'm willing to put aside my personal quibbles and look at the bigger picture. The 4 meg RAM cart is truly a thing of beauty - for less than the price of an N64 game you can turn your Saturn into a CPS2 coin-op. My mind boggles at the future possibilities: *Vampire Savior*, *Marvel Vs SF*, *SF3*, a new 2D *Ghouls'n'Ghosts*?! SOA and Capcom simply **MUST** release this game over here. I figure it's up to SOA to bring to the cart so the ball is in their court. Failure to comply will constitute a criminal offense, punishable by a slow and painful death! What say you, Sega?! **K**

"The 4 meg RAM cart is truly a thing of beauty!"

R REVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	# OF PLAYERS - 2
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	DIFFICULTY - EASY
FORMAT - 1 CD + CART	AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

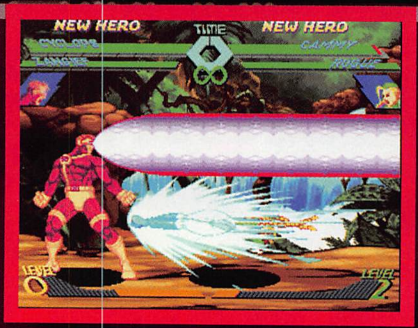


KNIGHTMARE The most insane 2D beat 'em up ever to grace a home console.

CYCLOPS

Leader of the X-Men, Cyclops is a near-Olympic athlete and trained martial artist. However, his real power comes from the concussion rays produced by his mutant eyes, focused by his visor into powerful optic blasts! Returning from *X-Men: COTA* Cyclops also retains his version of the dragon punch - the Gene Splice.

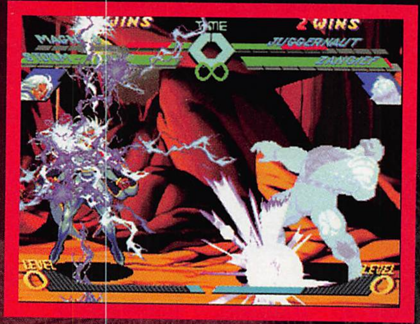




WOLVERINE

The adamantium clawed berserker with the mutant healing ability is back, and lethal as ever. King of the 'shake out' characters, Wolverine possesses a vicious dragon punch alternative along with his multi-directional drill claw. He also has one of the easiest infinite hit combos in the game.





STORM

Storm is mistress of the elements, empowering her with a wide array of tornado and lightning based attacks. She also has the ability to fly, enabling her to attack her opponents from above and run for cover. Which is a bit cheap really.



GAMBIT

The first of the new characters, Gambit's mutant powers allow him to charge items (specifically his deck of playing cards) with kinetic energy, making them into lethal projectile weapons. He is also highly skilled with his staff, which he uses to bludgeon his foes.

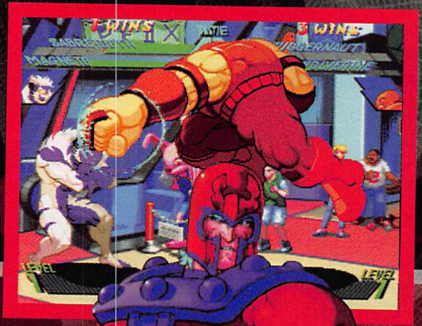




SABRETOOTH

Take Wolverine and replace his unbreakable adamantium skeleton with more muscles, sharper claws and an unfeasibly psychotic demeanor and you have Sabretooth. Stronger than Wolverine, but by strokes less agile. A combo monster.





ROGUE

My favorite of the new characters. Rogue is a southern belle with the mutant ability to sap the powers of anyone she comes into physical contact with. She also permanently possess some powers she stole from Mrs. Marvel, giving her the ability to fly, limited invulnerability and superhuman strength. Stealing your opponents' keys moves is really quite cool.



MAGNETO

The master of magnetism might be quite slow, but his mutant powers allow him to strike at range and pull opponents towards him. Magneto's superb combination potential (particularly in the air) makes him an unconventional, yet powerful fighter.





JUGGERNAUT

He may not be as unstoppable as he is in the comics, but there's no denying that Juggernaut is big. Really big. And strong too. The downside of this is that he's a big target and literally every single one of his moves has a huge recovery delay. But that's the price you pay for power.





RYU
The ubiquitous world warrior returns once again, armed with his usual assortment of moves : fireball, dragon punch and hurricane kick. But this is a Marvel game, and all of his regular specials have been beefed up accordingly. His fireballs are bigger than ever before and he can perform any of his moves in the air!

KEN
Like Ryu, Ken enjoys some 'enhanced' versions of his regular SF moves, including a spectacular flaming dragon punch and air fireballs similar to Akuma's in *SSF2 Turbo*. His vertical super dragon punch is truly a sight to behold, producing a column of fire that engulfs his opponent causing massive damage.

CHUN-LI
Old chunners exercises speed over power, as always, although this time she's a little bit more powerful than you'd expect. Her 1000 foot kick can be performed in he air, and her super fireball from *SF Alpha* has become a vast plasma ball which fills half the screen. Not quite as deadly as she is in *Alpha 2* though.

ZANGIEF
The largest fighter the Street Fighters can muster is still tiny when compared with Juggernaut. As always 'gief is a slow, lumbering fighter armed only with close range attacks. Hard to get in on an opponent, but once you do his spinning pile driver and final atomic buster are massively damaging.

CAMMY
SF Vs X-Men takes place while Cammy was working for Shadowloo, BEFORE she joined the British Government. As such she wears the Shadowloo uniform, and Vega (Bison) occasionally appears in her win pose. Perhaps the fastest character in he game, she literally turns into a flash of light when she uses her cannon spike on cannon drill attacks.

NASH (CHARLIE)
Guile's long time buddy has all the same moves as the blonde Marine, just without the haircut. He is one of the few charge characters in the game, which limits his combo potential but also makes him an interesting fighter. Like all the other SFers, his regular and super attacks have been enhanced almost beyond recognition!

DHALSIM
Like all the slow SFers, the increase in speed in *X-Men Vs SF* makes Dhalsim a far better fighter than he ever was in the Alpha games. He still has numerous long range attacks, including his flame breathing which now reaches ridiculous distances.

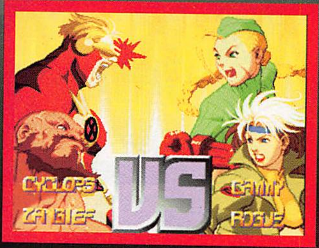
VEGA (M. BISON)
The dark lord of Shadowloo and master of Psycho Power returns with a new agenda - that being to use the appearance of the mutants for his own evil ends. Bison makes the transition to the *X-men*-style control system well, with decent mobility and awesome supers.



SWITCH FIGHTERS!

As you may have gathered by now, in *X-Men Vs SF* each player takes a team of two warriors in to battle. Although you only control one character at a time, you can swap between them at will by simply pressing Fierce and Roundhouse whilst on the ground. During the switch both of your characters are invincible, though the arriving warrior is vulnerable for a brief moment after he/she/it lands. The character who is off screen slowly regains a portion of their energy (the red bar), so make sure you swap strategically. When both of your characters are knocked out, the fight is over!









TEAM COUNTER

Similar to an Alpha Counter, the Team Counter turns a defensive block into an offensive strike, at the cost of one super bar. As your on-screen character blocks an opponent's attack, perform a quarter circle from away to down on the d-pad and press Fierce and Roundhouse together. Your other character will then leap out and perform his/her key special move. These counter normally have a close range, so don't waste them on projectile attacks.





TEAM SUPERS

Although you cannot control both of your team characters at once, there is a way to combine their attacks. By performing a fireball motion (down, down/toward, toward) with Fierce and Roundhouse both of your characters will perform their supers simultaneously, providing some truly spectacular graphical effects! It takes two super bars, but if the attack connects it causes massive damage. Certain combinations of supers work better than others, so experiment.

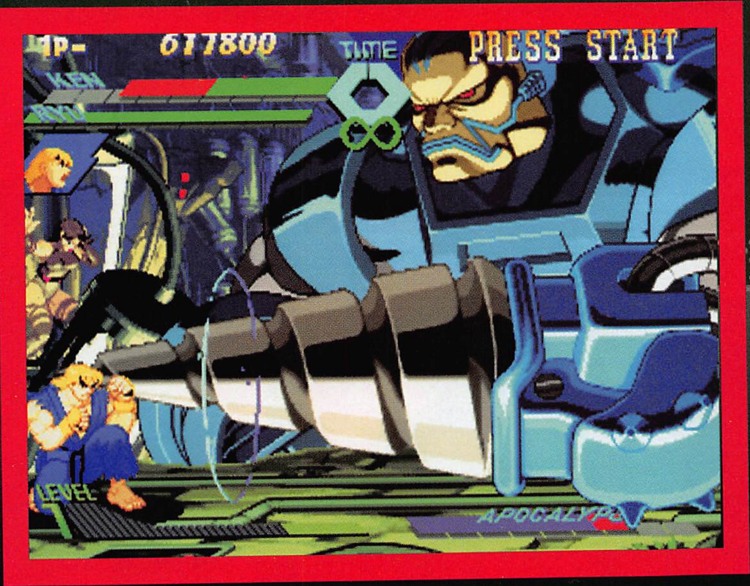












COMBO MANIA!

One of the major differences between the *Street Fighter* series and the *Marvel* (*X-Men*) series are the chain combos and air combos. Every character in X-Men Vs SF has a launcher move, which sends your opponent flying up into the air. By following them up immediately (simply hold up) you can continue the combo in the air.

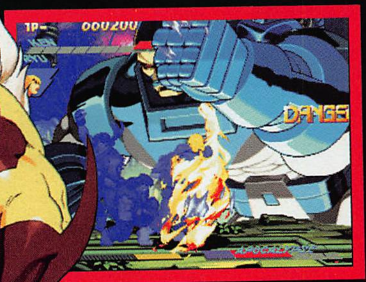
THE BOSS: APOCALYPSE

X-men Vs SF's unplayable boss, Apocalypse, is a mutant who supposedly originated in Egypt, thousands of years ago around the time of the Pharaohs. He has the ability to reshape himself into any form he chooses, and in this game he chooses to be huge! He is so big that he does not fit entirely on the screen, and the only parts of his body that you can attack are his head and arm. Cool!

THE (NOT VERY) HIDDEN CHARACTER: GOUKI (AKUMA)

The not very well hidden Gouki is as powerful as ever. In *X-Men Vs SF* he's taken time out from following Ryu to study a new fighter that has piqued his curiosity- Wolverine! He has all his moves from *Alpha 2*, and can perform his Instant Hellish Death Strike with a mere level one super bar. Beware!



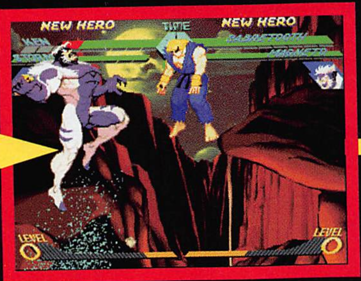




AKUMA









SUPER COMBOS



COOL STUFF!

This may be pretty much a 'no frills' conversion of the coin-op but that hasn't stopped Capcom from adding a couple of cool home exclusive features.

SHARP SOUND EFFECTS - Move to the Mono/Stereo option and press R for a new option! Even clearer effects!

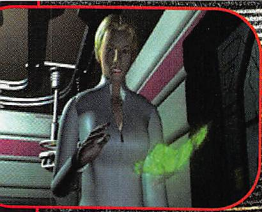
QUICK RESTARTS - Hold down L, R and Start on the loser's pad after finishing a bout and the fight will begin again, immediately!

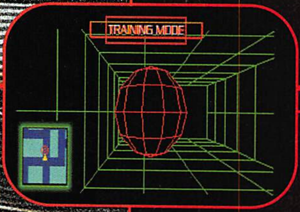
EXTRA SPEED SETTINGS - Beat the game and you can access several new speed settings, both faster AND slower.

COMBO GAUGE - Beat the game and you will be given the option to have your Super bars full, the whole time!

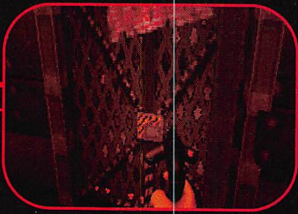
SAME CHARACTER TEAMS - Beat the game and you can pick two of the same character on one team. Enjoy four Juggernaut's!













ENEMY ZERO





"...ell ... hello.... this..is Laura Lewis... Is anyone out there.. Something... gone terribly wrong..."

TRANSMISSION ENDED_

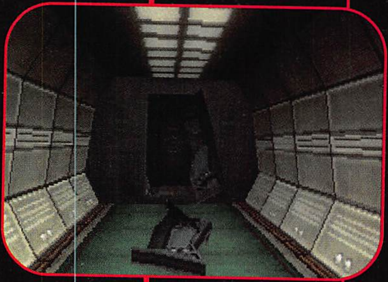
I both love and hate *Enemy Zero*. I really don't know how else to say it. It's unique, engrossing and incredibly frustrating all at the same time. It draws you in with lush, high quality cinematics and tense, genuinely frightening action scenes then spits you out with huge loading delays, terrible lip syncing and a shockingly inconsiderate game structure. At it's best, you (well, Laura) will be creeping down a darkened corridor listening carefully to your motion sensor as two invisible creatures zero in on your location. At it's worse you'll either be stuck by a ridiculous 'puzzle' or find yourself traveling halfway across the ship just to re-load your one shot weapon.

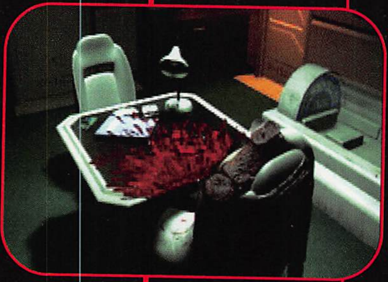
Okay, things I like about *Enemy Zero*: I like the premise. Just like *Alien*, only the creatures in *E0* are invisible 90% of the time - very smart. I like the way the game is set-up. FMV rooms linked by real-time polygonal corridors where the action takes place. It's a good balance between FMV and 'real' gameplay and somehow manages to be more than the sum of it's parts. I like the action; battling aliens by sound alone is an innovative concept that works well. I also like the CG; clean, smooth, realistic and well directed.

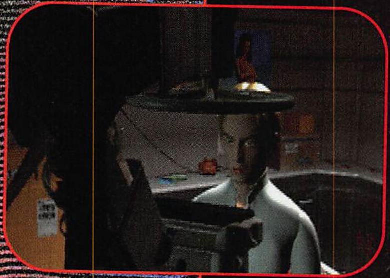
Things I don't like about *Enemy Zero*: I don't like the pace. The interactive FMV sections are like moving through treacle and there's a lot of loading. You cannot skip any FMV, ever, and some of the 'puzzles' (I use the term loosely) require random and illogical experimentation to succeed. I don't like the way the save/load game system is implemented (you have limited saves and loads) and I REALLY don't like the way the game is exceedingly short, with little replay incentive.

So should you buy *E0*? Well I hate to sit on the fence, but I think that depends on YOUR personal taste. *E0* is an 'experience game', sort of like *Parappa the Rapper*. How much you like it will depend on how willing you are to suspend your disbelief and get immersed in the story and world of the game. Yes the theme is cool, but the sedate pace and limited game mechanics may prove too frustrating for some. **K**









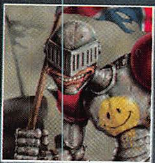




R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - WARP	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
A unique and engrossing experience; if you have the patience...

SEGA Touring Car Championship











Touring Car is a near-perfect example of Sega's gameplay brilliance hanging on for dear life in the programming odyssey from Model 2 to Saturn hardware. It is always, without a doubt, quite an ambitious undertaking. True to form however, *Touring Car* plays for all intents and purposes just like its full-fledged arcade counterpart (read: very well), but in this case especially, the graphics at first glance appear troubled. Namely, it suffers from a schizophrenic frame rate (it jumps wildly between 15 and 30) and almost astonishing z-buffering problems, most certainly trade offs for the game's distant draw in



and blinding speed. These are compromises that I can, however, appreciate and am willing to live with, simply because gameplay remains seemingly unaffected by these graphical issues.

Well, with all that junk out of the way, let's talk about the game itself, shall we? *Touring Car* offers up a choice of four real life TC spec vehicles: There's an AMG Mercedes C-\Class, Opel Calibra V6, Toyota Supra GT, and Alfa Romeo 155V6Ti. There are three main courses to race through, with a fourth and then fifth track opening up once you place first overall in the Championship mode. Unlike some racing games, attaining champion status doesn't necessarily mean being winner of each track. Rather, you're racing for an overall time against eight other cars. Placing first obviously helps, but it's the time difference between you and the nearest competitor that's important.



The courses themselves define the nature of the game and their relatively gentle curves and low turn count (at least on the first two beginner tracks) create an incredibly high speed environment that's almost intimidating at first. You're really going fast in this game, and it'll certainly take you several laps to come to grips with guiding your car cleanly through the course. But once you do, the fun of the game comes to the fore and you begin to appreciate the rush of speed *Touring Car* offers. As it is meant to be, it's a different experience than *Rally* or *Daytona*, but equally thrilling. And the music, which is absolutely first rate, is a perfect collection of pumping electronic racing tunes (some with funky lyrics) that heighten the action immensely.



Touring Car, rough looking engine and all, still has the polish of a lovingly crafted Sega game. The interface is well designed and has a fantastic look and feel, creating an aura of quality that subsequent play reveals to be more than an illusion. And while it may not reach the heights of *Sega Rally* (certainly one of the best console racers ever) in pure racing satisfaction, it's undoubtedly a very solid game that lives up to the admittedly high standard of its heritage.

SD

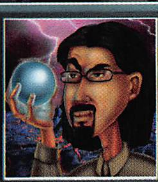


Saturn mode features include the ability to alter many aspects of a car's handling and performance profile and save them to memory.

REVIEW



DEVELOPER - AM ANNEX	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



SUBSTANCE D
A good Sega racer always hits the G-spot!





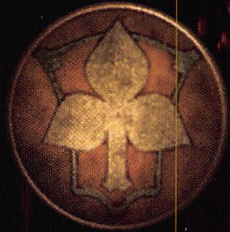






As of today, late in December, Sega hasn't officially announced *Shining Force 3*. There hasn't been any hoopla, there hasn't been a press release. But should you talk to the reps at Sega's main consumer department, they'll tell you it's definitely coming. Talk to the big-wigs inside Sega and they say it's on the way. Hit the internet, and it's common knowledge: *Shining Force 3* will be translated for a '98 release in the US. Whatever the case may be, this game MUST come to the US soon. Past *Shining Force* fans will smile madly (as I did) when they see this game. Strategy RPG fans will be in heaven. This is quality gaming!

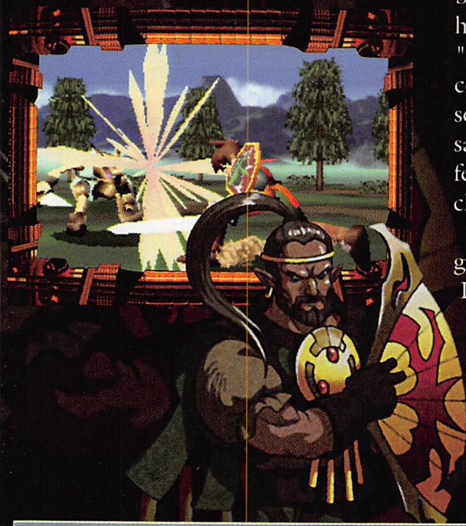
Man, I'm having a good time with *Shining Force 3*. It's everything I could have hoped for in a 32-bit SF game: Awesome graphics, super-fast loading, and genius battle design. So why did it take so long? After-all, *Shining Force* is one of the strongest supported series in Japan. The sequel was in HIGH demand. Well, Sonic Software Planning refused to start development before the Saturn's hardware had been fully scrutinized. Maximizing the system was their goal, however long it should take. And while the engineers toiled over a seemingly impossible engine, the design of this massive 3-disc epic was being carefully planned by both Camelot AND Sonic (a powerful combo of creative forces). The result is breathtaking.



Shining Force III

As opposed to lop-sided gameplay content on multi-disc games (such as *FFVII's* short last disc), *Shining Force 3* will feature a minimum of 30 solid hours on each of its three discs. Each disc (or "Scenario") will be released separately, over the course of 7 to 8 months. And unlike most other series, each scenario is a unique story, set in the same time frame, as seen through the eyes of 3 different individuals living under 3 different social classes. Sounds cool!

I must apologize. I haven't gone as deep into the gameplay as you were hoping for. Truth be told, I've only played through a dozen hours on *SF3's* first disc; desperately crammed into a few extremely hectic days before the close of the issue. This was more of a teaser, for you and me. I'll play her all the way through and have some quality pages of info ready for you next issue! *G*







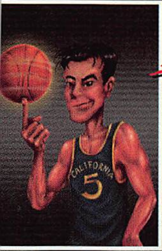
PREVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAMELOT/SONIC
PUBLISHER - SEGA
FORMAT - 3 CD'S
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - N/A
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



GLITCH
This is three chunky CDs of quality gaming!

GAMEFAN SPORTS



JOE KIDD

KIDD'S Corner

What an amazing year 1997 was for sports gamers, concluding with 6 out of the top 10 games throughout the Holiday season being kickace sports titles like *Quarterback Club '98* for the N64 and *NBA Live 98* by EA. We saw some legendary attempts made at tackling the N64 platform by guys like Konami and Acclaim, and others that fell a bit short of expectations. *GameDay* rose to the top of the charts, establishing itself as the new champion of the gridiron, and even though Sony's *ShootOut '98* hasn't hit the blocks just yet, the selection of basketball titles in '97 was hardcore, with a couple under dogs in *Fastbreak '98* and *NBA Action '98* making strong bids, giving us a glimpse of the future in net affairs.

1998 looks to bury '97 in its dust with ground breaking techniques, camera perspectives, heightened AI and more realistic graphics than ever imagined, bringing us closer to the field of play each time. EA isn't the only big fish in the sea anymore, and last year they were caught... we'll all get to see what they're made of when they come out at the bell.

Joe Kidd can be reached for questions or comments at:
rlee@metropolismedia.com

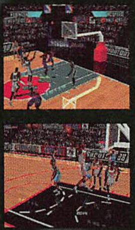
« PREVIEWS «





Edging closer to the All-Star break already, everyone's got their basketball titles on the shelves, and ShootOut is still down the road a bit. The reigning champions of the hardwood are going to have to come out swinging, because EA, Midway and Sega all have very solid games out thus far, and we haven't seen the finished product on In The Zone '98 for the N64 just yet.

NBA ShootOut '98





Acclaim's coming out firing early this year, on their next installment of their *Breakaway* series. The *'99* version however will be a long awaited gift to all of the eager Nintendo 64 owning hockey fans. If they can do with hockey, what they did with football, we're in for a treat.

Breakaway '99-N64







Even though Dean Smith and Rick Pitino are gone from the college ranks, and guys like Kobe and KG are jumpin' straight to the big money, March Madness is still the only show in town. EA knows what's up, and find themselves alone atop the NCAA basketball world.

March Madness 98

Not only are they gonna takeover by default, but the game actually looks solid. It's all about the grabbin' your fav college team and takin 'em to the Tourney! Ben Braun is going all the way!



THE PLAYERS



JOE KIDD



THE ROOKIE



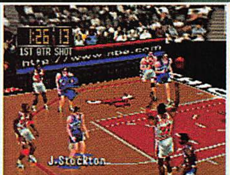
JACQUES STRAP



ECM

VIEWPOINTS

In the Zone '98 — Konami — Nintendo 64



In the Zone '98
Konami
Nintendo 64

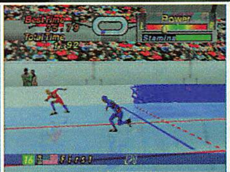
What an auspicious start the Zone franchise got off to, but not much has changed since then. The game still has no ounce of realism, and as we've all seen before, there are major AI issues to be dealt with here. They have added stat-tracking, Shaq and Bark, and new animations, but those are merely the market standard by now.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	7	7	6	5	71

I had higher hopes for this title. Last year's PSX version was a huge step forwards for Konami. This year, it resembles more of a stumble than a step. This game's only saving grace is that the N64 is virgin territory and hoop fans will rejoice. But then again, a saltine tastes like a Ritz to a starving man.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	7	8	6	6	73

Nagano Winter Olympics — Konami — Nintendo 64



Nagano Winter Olympics
Konami
Nintendo 64

I like Track and Field, and I love Decathlete...but this doesn't really do it for me. The game is just really boring, and maybe it has something to do with the events. Maybe 'summer' stuff is just more fun. I mean really, do we really need curling (now I'll get death threats from the Curling League of America)?! If you must buy this game, I 'd go with the N64 rev-smoother engine and better gameplay overall. Just don't expect too much from this one <yawn>.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	7	5	5	5	65

If you've got to buy one of these Nagano titles, pray you own a N64. Better graphics and smoother gameplay make this a more enjoyable playing experience. As an added bonus, the N64 version contains more events to compete in, but the best is still... curling. This is no IT&F. <yawn>

G	C	P	M	O	
7	6	6	5	6	69

Nagano Winter Olympics — Konami — PlayStation



Nagano Winter Olympics
Konami
PlayStation

As it goes for the N64 version, so it stands for the PS. Basically the same gameplay with weaker graphics, this is just as boring...Zzzzz. Maybe I just don't get it when it comes to games of this type. I figure that a lot of developers tend to take short cuts on a license like this and let the name carry it-bad move. If you can help it, steer clear and hold out for Winter Heat on SS...if not, well, don't say I didn't warn ya.

G	C	P	M	O	
6	6	5	6	5	60

Much like the skier, to my left, this game plunges, head first, into the abyss. Could this possibly come from the same company that brought us the stellar International Track & Field? Aaaaargh! Terrible mechanics, choppy graphics and none of the kinetic energy, that charged IT&F, make this a turkey fit for Izzy. A company I have come to count on, for great games, has let me down, threefold, this month.

G	C	P	M	O	
5	6	6	4	5	58

1997 Sports Top 10

Joe Kidd

1. GameDay '98 - PS
2. NBA Live 98 - PS
3. NHL 98 - PS
4. Int'l Superstar Soccer 64 - N64
5. Triple Play 98 - PS
6. Major League Baseball '98 - PS
7. NBA Fastbreak '98 - PS
   NBA Action '98 - SS
8. Quarterback Club '98 - N64
9. NHL FaceOff '98 - PS
10. World Series Baseball - SS

The Rookie

1. NHL 98 - PS
2. NBA Live 98 - PS
3. NFL GameDay '98 - PS
4. International Superstar Soccer 64 - N64
5. World Series Baseball - SS
6. Triple Play 98
7. Major League Baseball '98
8. Ten Pin Alley
9. VR Baseball
10. NBA Action '98 - SS

Jacques Strap

1. Jimmy Johnson Football '98 - PS
2. PGA Tour 98
3. Grand Slam Baseball - PS
4. Need For Speed 2 - PS
5. Bottom of the 9th - PS
6. Sumo 64 - N64
7. K-1 Arena Fighters - PS
8. J-League Dynamite Soccer - N64
9. Nagano Winter Olympics - PS/N64
10. Anything Saturn or Jaguar

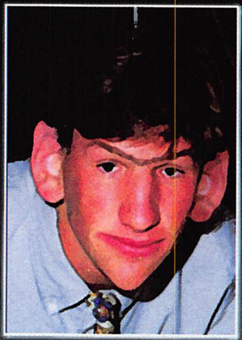
ECM

1. World Wide Soccer '98 - SS
2. Int'l Superstar Soccer - N64
3. World Series Baseball '98 - SS
4. NHL 98 - PS
5. GameDay '98 - PS
6. All Japan Pro Wrestling - SS
7. NBA Live '98 - PS
8. NHL Powerplay 98 - SS
9. FIFA Soccer 98 - N64
10. Geoff Higgins' Power Cricket '98 - PS

R REVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - KONAMI
- PUBLISHER - KONAMI
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR. '98



THE ROOKIE
I'll be in the lodge sippin' cider.

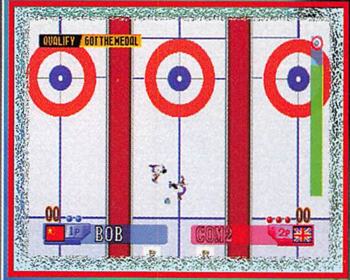


All I can say is "What the hell happened?". Here you've got developer, Konami, responsible for the classic coin-op *Track & Field* and the superb PlayStation jaunt, International *Track & Field*. Konami has a chance to hit us with another wham-bam arcade sport title and capitalize on the Olympic fever. All of the elements seemed to be there. Somewhere along the way, though, something happened...



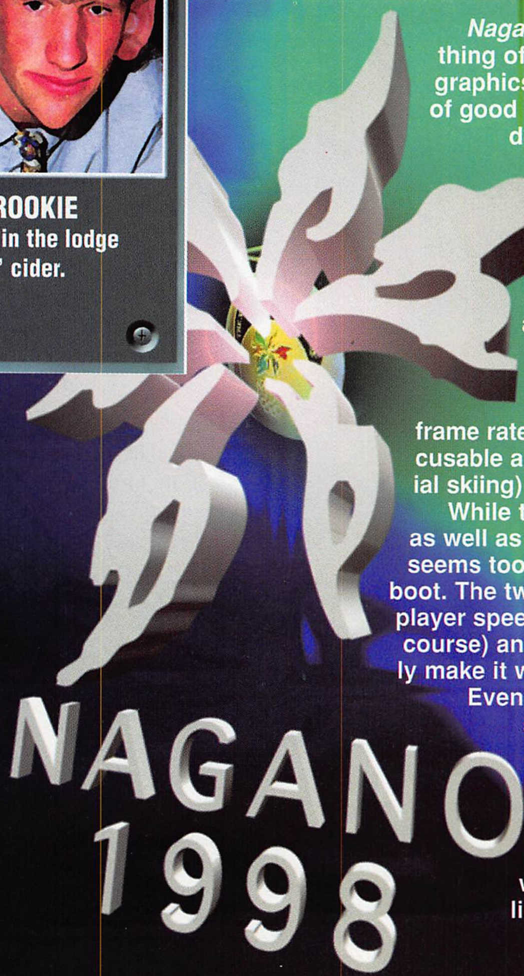












Nagano Winter Olympics '98 is something of a dud, plain and simple. Shoddy graphics, poor play mechanics and a lack of good play modes make this one borderline excruciating.

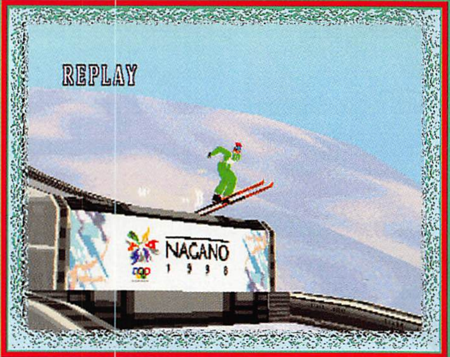
Like in the *T&F* titles, *Nagano* is about button whacking. Speed and timing are everything, but tennis elbow is all you get out of this puppy. Both play modes are severely disjointed and with little to speak of, in stat tracking, to even bother with, a one player game is severely limited. The frame rates and texture warping are inexcusable and some events (like freestyle aerial skiing) have badly devised mechanics.

While there are nearly a dozen events, as well as four player capability, the game seems too short, with little replay value, to boot. The two bright spots are multiplayer speedskating (the short course) and curling, but they hardly make it worth while.

Even as a rental, it's a sketchy investment, but Olympic Fever is a good excuse. Hopefully this won't deter Konami, or any other developers, from dipping into the wholly unused Olympic license, in the future. *TR*







If there is one thing that can be said for *Nagano 64*, it's that it is, at least, better than its PlayStation counterpart. While the same lame mechanics and lackluster gameplay mar the overall product, *Nagano 64* does run smoother and include a couple of extra events.

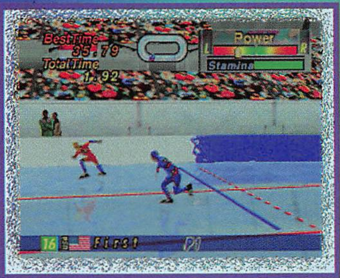
You don't want to keep harking back to the classic *Track & Field*, or last years' glorious *International Track & Field*, but that's about all





















you are left to do, after playing this title. The graphics and sound are average, at best, leaving the game's sole selling point as playability. Unfortunately, the way in which the button use is incorporated, as well as the design of each, individual events leave the gamer either frustrated beyond belief or just plain bored.

Nagano 64 serves up a baker's dozen of events, ranging from such classic contests as speedskating, to crowd pleasers like snowboarding, and even the obscure event of curling (surprisingly the game's most enjoyable event). Whether it's that these events don't translate well to a video game or that they were designed poorly, I won't comment. What I will tell you is that more straightforward events, such as bobsled and luge, are given no depth, and high-octane events, such as freestyle ski aerial, are just outright frustrating. What's even more frustrating is the lack of statistical depth, presentation and interesting play modes. While the game offers no way of tracking long term stats, maintaining interest among single player and multi-player competition is zilch. On top of that, winning a gold in any particular event offers little in the way of reward. On top of all of this, the modes which you have to choose from string events together in poorly, leaving overall competition disjoined.

It hurts me to say that, what should have been the glorious sequel to last year's International Track & Field, resembles more of a sophomore slump, than anything else. Avoid this title. ***TR***

REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - KONAMI

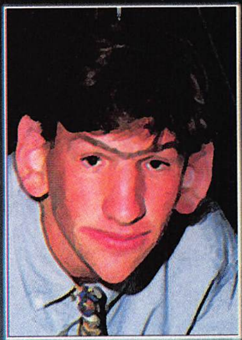
PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR. '98

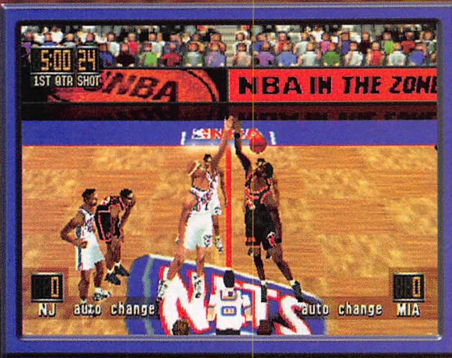


THE ROOKIE

The agony of defeat...

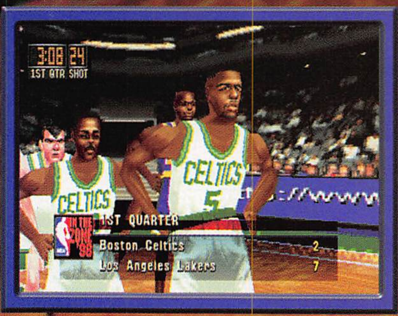




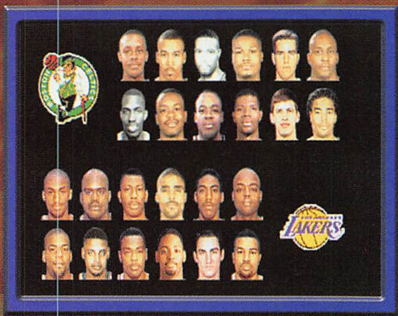








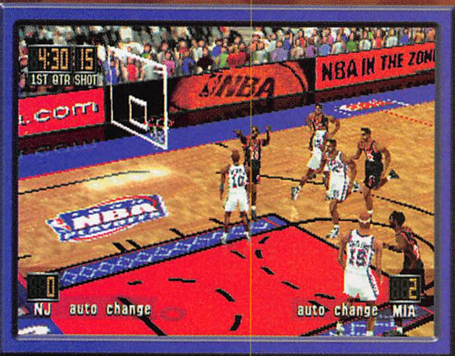
I t wasn't too long ago that I proudly acclaimed *In The Zone* as one of my favorite sports games. Loved the polygonal players, the physicality of the rebounding and the sweet 'oops above the rim. Couldn't wait for this year's installment, what would that "next level" be with Konami? A whole lot of the exactly the same thing unfortunately. Sure there's the much-needed addition of stat-tracking, new moves and animations and even Create Player, but who doesn't have all that by now? We aren't expecting the old college try here, we're expecting nothing but the best, ground-breaking, rim-rattling improvements and *IT Zone '98* simply doesn't deliver that. Ya know how Karl Malone complained because last year the Jazz were in the Championships, and then summer passed by with no improvements to speak of? Well... the same goes with me and the *Zone*.



NBA IN THE ZONE '98

Zone used to be so ahead of their time, and now it's just another mediocre game, because it really hasn't strived to become a legitimate basketball sim. I mean, the addition of Barkley and Shaq is nice, but not enough to make us overlook the glaring flaws. What flaws you ask? The transition game is way too slow... you can't push the ball up the court, because not only is there no type of "icon passing" system to speak of, but even if you do succeed in getting it to the man furthest up the court, the defense ALWAYS catches up to you. It's really frustrating to attempt to get out on the break, but constantly be slowed down by the impenetrable defense. Just like last year's *Zone*, you bounce off of defenders, and you can forget about going around them baseline. The only thing you CAN do successfully, is push the defender until he's under the hoop and then dunk on him. Of course if you don't want to do that every time down the court, you can successfully execute the alley-oop play 9 times out of 10 once your man hits the right spot. They have made it more difficult to hit the 3, which is accurate to this year's extension of the arch. But you still have the advantage of totally easy steals and blocks, which is cool at first, but grows old quick -- just doesn't lend itself to a realistic NBA experience. Speaking of which, I can empathize with Konami having to deal with games made in Japan, but to not have correct NBA rules is a major faux pas. Not only can I call a timeout without it being my possession, but you can sub in players without calling a timeout, in the middle of the play! For crying out loud! Fouls, a major part of pro hoops, are practically non-existent in this game. I mean think of playing any sports game where you didn't have to worry about fouls... you can literally pummel the other guy, and the worse that can happen to you the majority of the time is that you'll steal the ball. Want more AI flaws? How about the fact that the AI almost never misses an open shot. Granted, guys that make $5 million per year shouldn't ever miss an open shot, but the reality of it is... they do. It's problems like these that make every player a cookie-cutter of the guy next to him. It doesn't matter if it says Barkley or O'neal on his back, because it's not subjective it's situational, which results in taking all individualism out of the game and completely transforms it into systematic, slow-down game.

There are plenty of neat aspects to this game, and if you want to know what they are read my review on last year's titles, because they're all the same, but that's the thing -- they're LAST year's. One thing I really love however, are the really nice blocks you can get off guys from behind... with authority! A lot of the stat overlays throughout the game are really nice too, comparing players of like positions and what not, but even those screens disappear so quickly you rarely get a chance to see what they said. I loved the original, but this *IT Zone '98* gives you that copied, unedited term paper feel -- overused and gone over with a very wide-toothed comb. Go buy last year's game for cheap and save the money. ***JK***





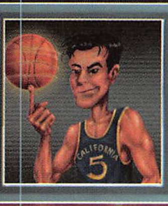


GAMEFAN SPORTS

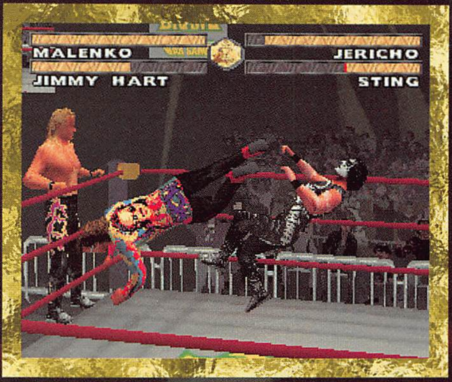
REVIEW

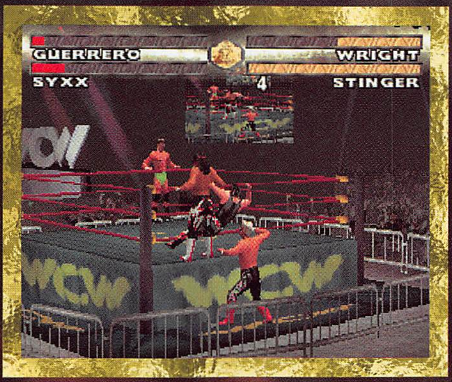
PlayStation

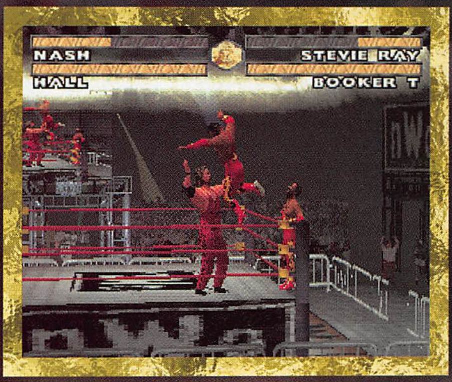
DEVELOPER - KONAMI	# OF PLAYERS - 1-8
PUBLISHER - KONAMI	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR. '98



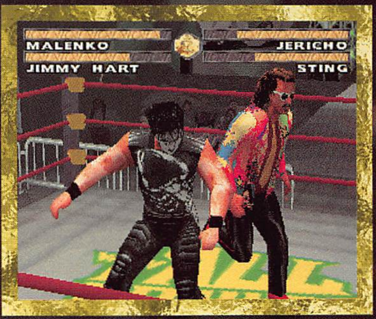
JOE KIDD
Not enough off season moves to stay a contender.







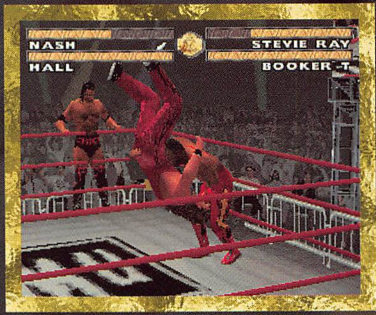
WCW NITRO



Here comes the newest WCW game, destined to sell a ton of copies in this wacky pro-wrestling lovin' country! T•HQ's *WCW Nitro* should be on the shelves right now, and if you're a big fan of the league you'll be in heaven with *Nitro*. If you're a big fan of solid, precise gameplay, on the other hand, you might be let down a little by *Nitro*. I'll shed some light on the matter, although I doubt it will affect the overall sales of the game...people just eat up these WCW wrestlers!



So, what makes *Nitro* such a must buy for WCW fans? How 'bout over 20 of the league's hottest superstars, like Hogan, Sting, Macho Man, Harlem Heat, DDP, the Giant, and everyone's favorite NWO duo, The Outsiders. Additionally, the characters have been texture mapped using high-resolution (but not technically "hi-res") digitized images of the actual wrestlers, and the polygonal models employ closed meshes, so those ugly seams ain't rearin' their glitchy heads. The arenas are pretty detailed, and come in multiple variations; such as Halloween Havoc, Nitro, and NWO motifs. And although the engine seems to support everything pretty well, with consistently high frame rates, the character animation and ring collision are incredibly choppy. You'll be pinning people when you're not even on top of them, pinning people all over the ropes, and breaking into the rope and turnbuckle polygons every time you play. The spasmic character movement is another thing of beauty... do any move, any throw, heck, just run with the character and you'll be enjoying (ahem) some twitchy polygonal action!



Naturally this makes its way into the gameplay, as the 'herky-jerky' behemoths choke their way through the motions. Nothing is instantaneous, nothing is smooth, so the game just chugs along painfully. Your moves consist of the basic slap, punch, and kick, as well as neck-breakers, suplexes, slams, arm takedowns, and a few ground hits. In fact, most of the wrestlers seem to share the same moves, besides 3 to 5 character-specific finishers. Heck, even secret characters, like little Elizabeth (Macho's lady), are able to pull off ridiculously powerful moves like neck-breakers. Ok, so it's funny... but I think it would've been cooler to see them doing real-life 'moves'. You know, have Elizabeth smack her purse up side your head, or have Jimmy Hart belt you one with his megaphone—that's what I'm looking for. At least the taunts are cool—especially Ric Flair's patented "Whooo!" and Sting's chest-pounding screech.



Oh well, so I'm not too high on *WCW Nitro*. It's still packed with modes (Championship, 1P, 2P, and variations of tag-team), and the options are sound. The WCW frills are also very nice, with plenty of good FMV intro, ending, and wrestler clips. And with 64 secret characters (you heard me!), there seems to be enough motivation to play... for die-hard fans anyway. I'll still be playing the *Toukon Retsuden* series for great 3D wrestling, and *FirePro Six Man Scramble* for the ultimate, pure fun, multiplayer wrestling experience. Sell me the gameplay, not just the license, okay?

R REVIEW

PlayStation

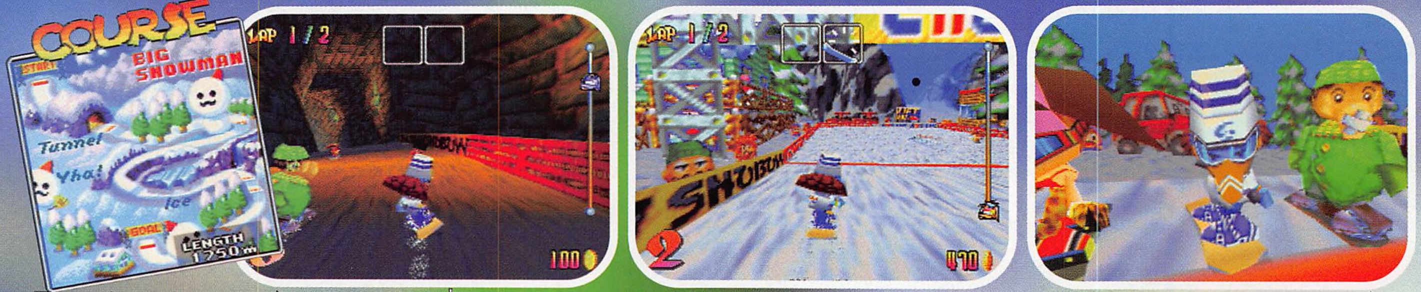
DEVELOPER - THQ	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - THQ	DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



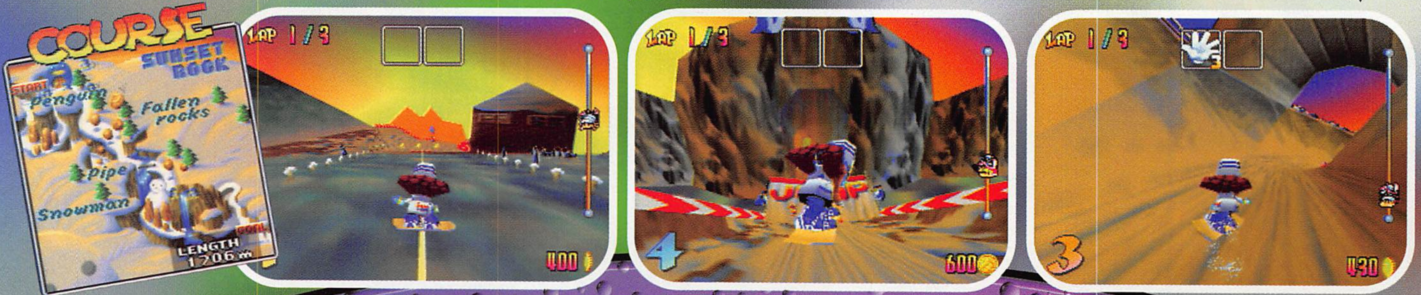
GLITCH
When you're Canadian, you're Canadian 4 LIFE!!!!



SHORT 'N FAST! THE FATTER THEY ARE, THE FASTER THEY GLIDE!!

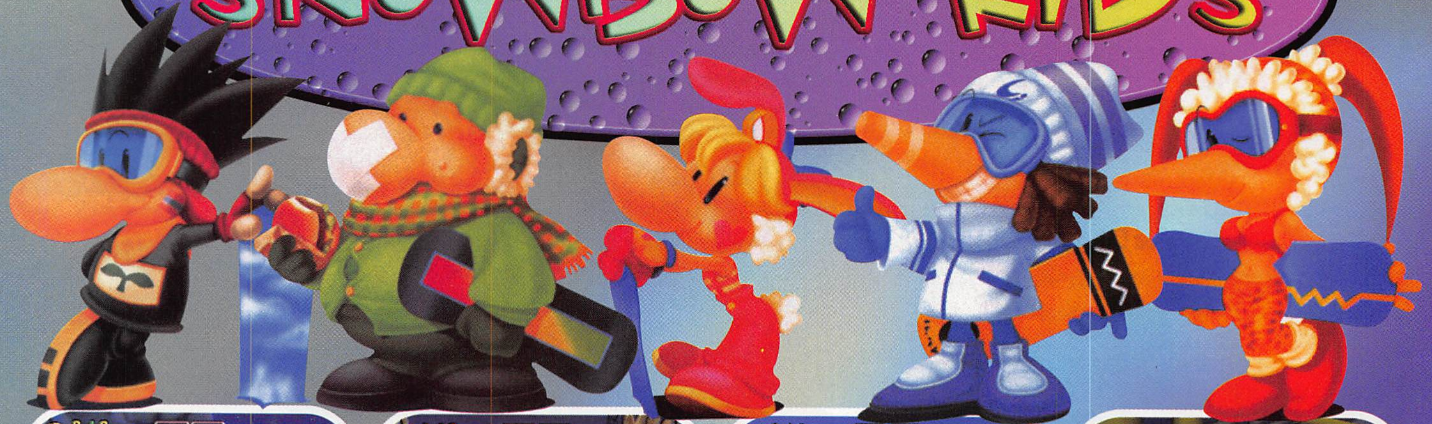


FRIGHTFUL WEATHER & A NOSE FULLA' FROZEN CRUSTIES! KIDS LUV 'EM!!



ATLUS REVEALS HIDDEN 64 BIT PROWESS AND REALLY BIG NOSES!! IN:

SNOWBOW KIDS





REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - RACDYM/ATLUS
PUBLISHER - ATLUS
FORMAT-PLASTIC OUTER SHELL
OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW/JAPAN



E. STORM Watch out where the Huskies go and don't you eat that yellow snow!!



HI-SPEED BOARDS AND WEAPONS GALORE... ALL PAST BEDTIME!!



SHRED THE GRASSY KNOLL! CH-CH-CH-CHIA!!



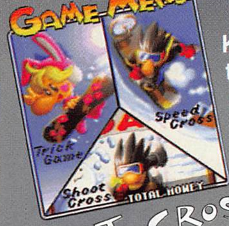


SHOOT CROSS! HALF PIPE! SPEED CHALLENGE!

1/2 PIPE! AERIAL MADNESS!!



SHIVERIN' SHOOT CROSS!



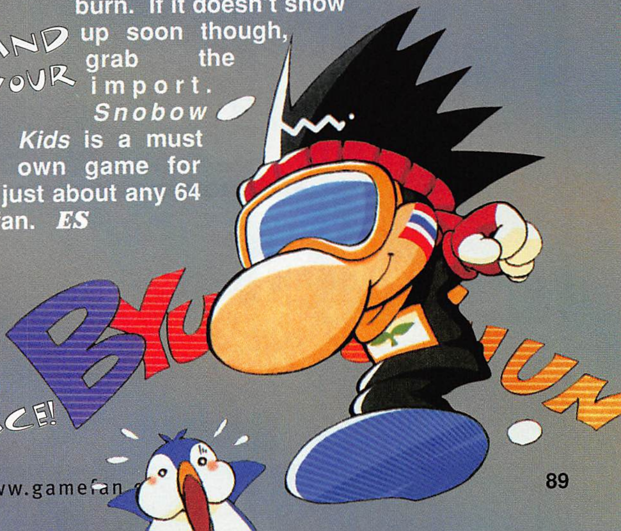


EARN CASH AND BUILD UP YOUR BOARD!



CIRCUIT RACE!

Here's all you need to know about Atlus' *Snobow Kids* (yeah, we goin' Sno Boardin'). Essentially this is *Mario Kart* ('cept with better balance and staying power) on the snow. Racers don't just slide down to the bottom but actually board the lift and race for up to five laps while launching weapons and picking up cash for aerial stunts! *Snobow's* got hidden courses, tons of options, like Skill Sports (1/2 pipe, Speed Thrills, and Shoot Cross), Time Trials, and even shops where you can upgrade and paint your board! It's Rumble Pak compatible too! The graphics and animation are excellent and get this, even the music's good! The characters are a whacky breed - stumpy little shredders with telescopic noses, but they're a loveable bunch. Here's a no-brainer American release with staying power to burn. If it doesn't show up soon though, grab the import. *Snobow Kids* is a must own game for just about any 64 fan. ***ES***











Once in a while, a long while, a hand drawn game will come around and temporarily interrupt your vision of the polygonal future. The last that comes to mind is *Castlevania Symphony of the Night*, and before that *Hermie Hopperhead*, and a few *MegaMans*. All of these however are for the most part action or platform titles, and all feature big surroundings around relatively little characters. What *Princess Crown* brings to the table is solid Action/Role Playing, mixed with huge hand-drawn multi-jointed characters, a gothic tale and art so good it'll make you cry, especially when you realize it will probably never see American shores. What you see on these pages is unfortunately only minutes into the game as my US Saturn (the one wired for screen captures) just won't digest this one no matter what converter I use. I did mange however to squeeze in a few minutes of gameplay by trying over and over. Beyond this sequence (which is more or less a playable beginning) lie sprawling villages rich with detail and amazing characters, forests and caves sprinkled with incredible enemies and three to four layers of parallax and fighting so good you'll wonder why the Saturn has back slid so far. Thus far after around four hours of gameplay I haven't gotten stuck once (those who frequent imports will pick up *Princess Crown* quickly) and am still controlling her royal highness, although I do believe a character change isn't far ahead. No matter though, I've grown quite attached to her and this entire game which I'm sure when I'm through with will find a special place among my import Saturn collection. This truly is a Japanese system. I cannot imagine owning a Saturn without all the glorious imports. ***ES***

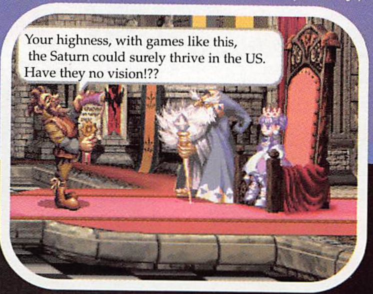


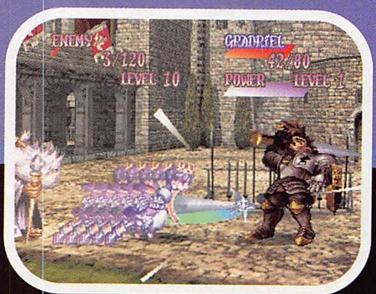








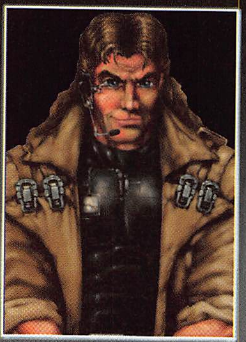




REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

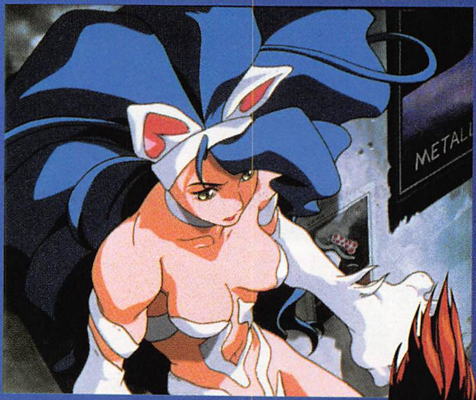
- DEVELOPER - ATLUS
- PUBLISHER - ATLUS
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE-NOW JPN/HERE NEVER



E. STORM
Take a good look, for this is a dying breed.



AnimeFan









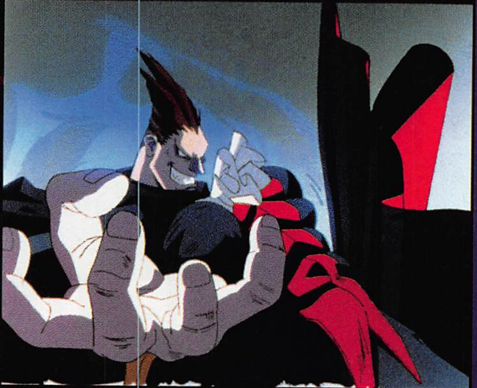
DARKSTALKERS
THE ANIMATED SERIES

Talk about an advantage... Going in, you know everyone's going to want DarkStalkers - The Animated Series just to see Morrigan (the worlds sexiest Succubus) in action. Me, I'm a Felicia fan, but hey, if I was a ghoul I'd take either in heart beat... if I had one. Anyway, these are beautiful Capcom characters so the box art's practically worth the price of admission.

VOLUME I

As in all fighting game-based anime series Vol. I is meant to set the stage, and a crowded stage this is. Demitri, Morrigan, Lord Raptor, Felicia, Anita, Donovan, and Phobos are all introduced in the first episode. The story is one extremely intertwined. Demitri has spent the last decade on earth feeding on the human race regaining his strength for before his return to the Demon World where he was previously defeated. Donovan is torn between his Dark self and his hunger for Vampire extermination, Felicia's got the public performance license for the DarkStalkers - a musical she's starring in, (a dancer by trade, go figure), and runs into Lord Raptor (god, he's evil) a rocker who first entertains then feeds on screaming teens, Anita (surprise! she speaks and has a major role) reveals the source of her power and mystery, Morrigan (Queen of the Night and part of the Demon World's Royal Family) desires a good fight having become bored with the demon realm and has her sights set on Demitri's throne, and the human race, well, they want the sun back! That bastard Demitri has extinguished the sun! No more tan lines!

In the end of part one, Phobos (or many like him) show up in defense of the humans and interrupt Morrigan and Demitri' first battle and it all comes to an



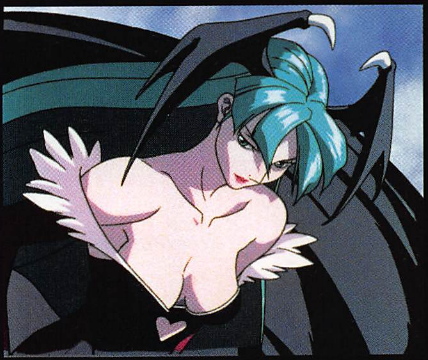


explosive end soon after.

So far so good. Darkstalkers has all the makings of a first class game turned anime! It's of much higher quality than Manga's Street Fighter series, with animation more on par with Battle Arena Toshinden's, but of course this is DarkStalkers so it all looks quite a bit better. Masashi Ikeda has done a fine job bringing the game to life.

With Lei Lei, Bishamon, Anakaris, Gallon, Victor von Gerdenheim, Aulboth, and Pyron yet to come, if the quality keeps up, DarkStalkers will undoubtedly become the best fighting game derived anime thus far in their evolution.

VIZ has always done fine dubs and in DarkStalkers case I'd say it lands somewhere in the middle. The Demons themselves (except for Felicia and Lord Raptor) are done very well and the mortals seem frightened enough. Overall part I thoroughly impressed me but most of all it wet my appetite for what is yet to come. And so, in the end, we get a pretty box and a top quality anime as well. DarkStalkers is first class all the way. ***ES***





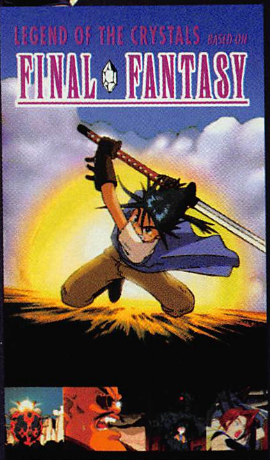
AF Review

F D C B A

animation
dubbing
story
music

B+





BASED ON THE BEST SELLING JAPANESE ROLE PLAYING GAME

Knowing full well that *Final Fantasy - Legend of the Crystals* was merely *based* on the game series, I hit play with major skepticism. After only a few minutes of viewing the amazing artistic style, great animation, and enjoying the ultimate American dub however, I knew, as will you, that this anime is designed to live up to the high standards set fourth by the number one RPG series of all time. The story takes place on Planet R where three of four Crystals that keep life in sync have been stolen. In chapter one we are introduced to Linaly and Prettz, descendants of the four Valiant ones (keepers of the stones if you will). Linaly's Grandpa senses trouble in the Temple of the Wind where the Wind Crystal is kept and so off they go to protect it. The journey is first interrupted by Rouge (like the make-up) - Queen of the Sky Pirates. This is a great character. She's nasty, (but not invincible) and cruel, (but in a sex vixen sort of way). For a Japanese-bred character she's got a lot of Ralph Bakshi in her. At first Prettz gets the best of her, dropping off a little explosive surprise, but later, after the crystal enters Linaly's body they meet again under, shall we say, temporarily dire circumstances. Through all of this, evil is prevelant in the story (in case you were wondering) but the main characters performances refreshingly overshadow them greatly (at least in the first two chapters). By the time the dust settles, (and I mean that quite literally as Rouge's Island is eventually blown to pieces), the crystal bares an ancient child and takes up resident in Prettz, and Valkas, the leader of the Goldwings (noble peace keepers of Planet R) finds himself head over heels for Rouge. I can hardly wait for the next episode! Besides just rocking, this anime is dubbed so well I can't imagine it any other way. This is the second hot dub from Urban Vision (the first being Twilight of the Dark Master). I can't recommend FF highly enough. ***ES***

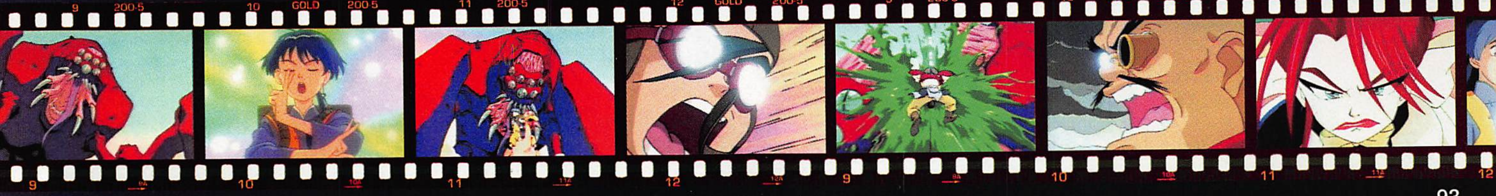
AF Review

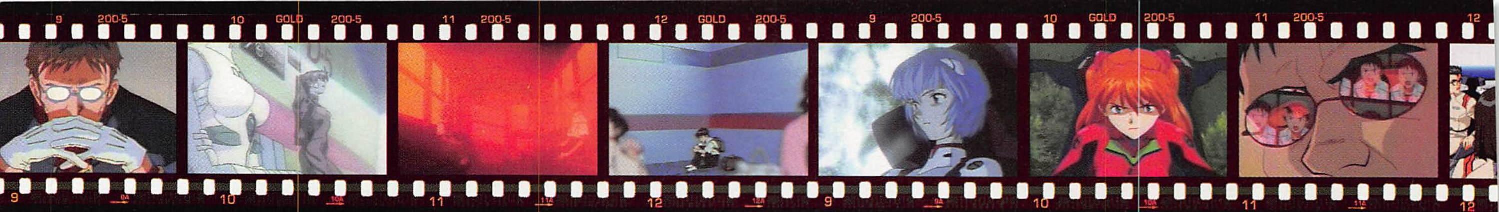
F D C B A

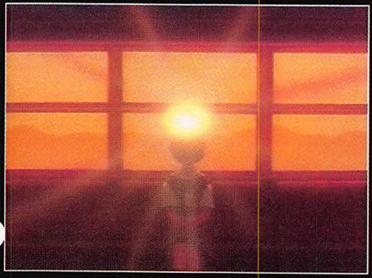
animation
dubbing
story
music

A

FINAL FANTASY
LEGEND OF THE CRYSTALS











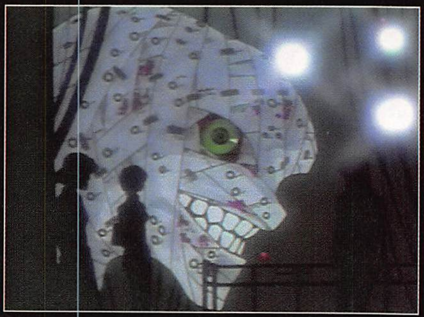


If Evangelion 0:8 & 0:9 shocked you, wait until you get a load of Shinji as his DNA becomes intermingled with EVA 01's and he not only becomes partially organic but begins to eat a defeated angel like a christmas turkey! A dramatic turn of events has taken place as we now learn that there is much more to the EVA project than previously thought. In Genesis 0:10 after Shinji's dad forces him to nearly kill the fourth child against his will, Shinji snaps and vows to never pilot an EVA again, but after the fiercest attack yet, both Osaka and Rei are fatally wounded and the strongest angel yet has breached Nerv.

Shinji decides to take control of his life and against his father's will boards EVA 01 and more aggressively than ever before he goes at the angel with a fury no one has ever seen. Just as he's about tear it to shreds however EVA 01 loses all reserve power and Shinji is at the mercy of the angel who is violently pounding at his plug. As Shinji's anger towards the EVA reaches the breaking point its eyes blaze and its amputated arm grows back organic!! Shinji has become liquid within the plug and now they are one!

Easily one of the most intense chain of events I've seen in the series. On top of everything else that's going on in the evolution of Nerv this latest development is a plot twist de jour!. As the episode continues and Shinji deals with his inner demons (within the capsule while the others try frantically to save him) things get very psychological.

From the light hearted antics of Pen to the frailty of young life Evangelion has swung over to the dark side. This series continues to bring us unsurpassed drama and especially in these ladder episodes is becoming increasingly more legendary. The fact that Shinji's school is made up completely of EVA pilot candidates (one of many new discoveries) alone gives me the creeps. Genesis 0:10 ends in a most peculiar way. See if you don't think so. Catch you next time. ***ES***.

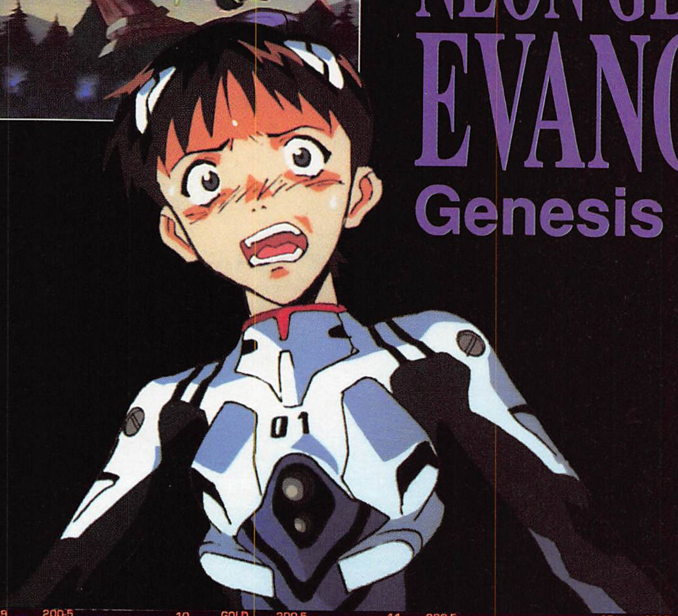




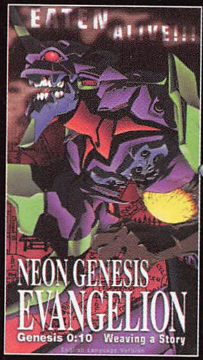


NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

Genesis 0:10







AF Review

F D C B A

animation
dubbing
story
music

A++



AnimeFan Interview

Central Park Media explains the art of the dub...

Q&A by Shidosh

AF) Where do you see the market for dubbed anime in the next 5 years?
The market for dubs is snowballing. Over just the past year and a half, a number of our newly-released dubbed titles have reached the top twenty Billboard Video Charts. With the release of each title, it is becoming clear that fans of animation are discovering Anime. According to the video game trade magazines, anime is rapidly moving into the mainstream, and is reflected in the demand for dubbed product. Although die-hard anime fans often prefer subtitles, the newer fans prefer dubs, instead. With the increased interest for dubbed titles, more and more creative and influential individuals are getting involved in the industry. From "movie stars" doing character voices and nation-wide theatrical releases, to "big-name" studios who are scheduled to release Japanese animation, the world of English dubbed anime is expanding and prospering. CPM was the first on the block to exploit new technologies such as DVD and linear CD-ROMs. We have the best web site in the world for fans of Anime, and the ever increasing demand for English language versions of our programs tells us that we have a lot more work cut out for us.

AF) How have the fans reacted to your dubs?
The fans give us LOTS of feedback on just about every title we produce here at CPM. And in terms of Dubbing, most everything we receive is complimentary. People always seem to be amazed that the programs originated in an entirely different language. We have a staff that reviews Email every day, and forwards each correspondence to the appropriate departments and people. The Emails we receive on CPM's Japanimation Station (on AOL) are full of comments about the dubbing. The effort that the extreme fans of Anime, or "otaku", put into their reviews is really inspiring. But perhaps the most exciting feedback we get from our consumers are the correspondences from "first time" viewers of Japanimation. They usually state how a friend turned them on to the genre and now they just can't get enough! Granted, not everything we hear is 100% complimentary, but that's ok, too. Frankly, it gives us direct access to the opinions and ideas of the fans. These comments are important in helping us create the most accurate and widely appealing dubs we can. If they don't like something we did, we'll learn from the experience and do better next time!

AF) What's the hardest part about doing a dub? A sub?
There is no "one part" of creating a dub that is any more or less difficult than the others. There are many challenging and deciding moments in creating a new soundtrack for a pre-existing image and you must be sure not to change the vision of the original director. The process begins as soon as the master tapes arrive from overseas. We watch the programs,a nd begin to get a feel for the original Japanese versions long before we start plugging in the microphones. Perhaps, it's that very aspect of not rushing into a dub that is the most difficult at times. You'll watch a new title and the wheels start to spin playing all the endless variables off one another. One of the most challenging aspects of dubbing is getting the translated lines to appear as though the program was originally created in the English language. In other words, the animated characters are originally speaking in Japanese,and their mouth movements (or "lip flap") are animated in kind: our job is to take the English lines and make it seem as though these characters are actually speaking English according to their "lip flap". The bottom line is that the process of casting and designing the overall feel of the new English language version must be both methodical and consistent or what you will end up with won't compliment the original version - and the fans are going to let you know!
The toughest part of doing a sub is trying to take an awkward literal translation and turn it into a conversational English (while making sure that everything is spelled right).

AF) What's the most important thing you need to be concerned with when doing a dub?
Quality. Great actors and great performances = great shows and great success! The "Dub Club" at CPM is simply the best in the business. We'll go head-to-head with anybody else's dubs.

AF_ What's the difference in cost between doing a dub and a sub for an anime?
Dubbing is more expensive than subtitling from a production standpoint. Both incur some similar expenses, such as translation costs and formatting, but dubs are more hands-on and state-of-the-art recording studios have a tendency to knock your numbers around a little. Dubs require a lot more studio time, so you have to schedule the time, audition actors, editing, etc. Then, of course, your actors expect to get paid, too.

AF) How much time does it take to record an English dub?
Depending on the length of the show and the number of speaking roles, a dub can take anywhere from 4 days to 3 weeks to record completely.

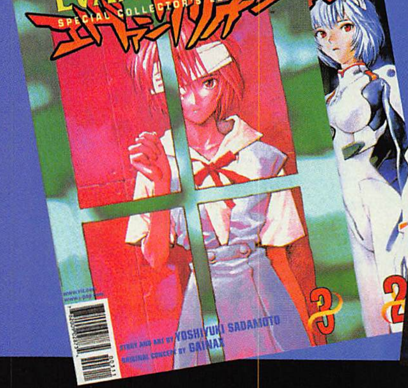
AF) Do you have a set pool of actors that you use for all of your dubs, or do you hire different people for each title? How do you find your voice actors?
We're always looking for new and exciting voice talents, but we do have a few "core actors" that we like to use because of their versatility, experience, and creative insights. In terms of finding talent, it seems that once the word is out that we are producing new shows, the actors practically come out of the woodwork. Thank god for voice mail! In fact, many actors turn their messages into over-the-phone auditions, which can be either amusing, annoying, or just plain scary! Generally, we only used trained voice actors. In the studio, time really is money. The actors have to be able to walk into the recording booth, take direction, and perform their roles in a minimum of "takes."

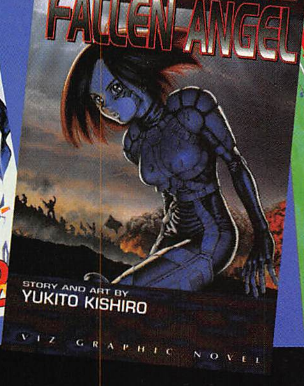
AF) When choosing a voice actor for a specific character, do you try to find someone who is similar to the Japanese voice, or do you choose someone who's voice fits that character best?
A great question! You must embrace the characters developed by the original director who was probably in the studio at the time of the original Japanese recording. So, ultimately we try to stay true to the original char acterizations. However, we hav found a tendency in Japanese voice casting that we try to avoid:almos every young female character has voice so highly pitched that dog around the country moan in agony (c appreciation). We try to bring a littl more versatility to the characters b incorporating fitting yet unconvention al voice styles.
When casting a voice actor we try t take certain visual cues into accoun First is the physical and emotiona appearances of the characters. Wh are they (Hero or Villain, Comic Relie or Tragic Heavy)? How old? What' their temperament? How are they an mated (Realistic or Cartoonish)? Fo example, you would expect that a bi burly biker guy would have a big, grav elly voice. Sometimes the Japanes might have a guy with a thinner sound ing voice doing that part, and unles the fact that his voice isn't "tough" i an important element of the story o the character's personality- we'r going to give him some grit!

AF) Can fans get in touch with you English voice actors?
If fans want to send a message to th actors, their best bet is to Email us o use the Japanimation Station on AOL We'll pass the message along to th studio.

AF) What titles do you have planne for DVD in the future? What is you opinion of the DVD format? How ar the sales of the Battle Aren Toshinden DVD?
We plan to release several more titles on DVD, but the list hasn't been final ized yet. DVD is perfect for Anime Did you see our Toshinden DVD? The chapter pages,character descriptions and every single element of the forma lends itself to the use of multi-lan guage title with incredible artwork It's a marriage made in heaven. The feedback was great and the sales reflect that. When we're at shows, i seems that everyone who owns a DVD player has the Toshinden DVD and they love it. We're constantly selling out of them!

AF) Sounds promising. Our experience with DVD thus far has been equally satisfactory. Thanks for your time and good luck in the future!







MANGA!

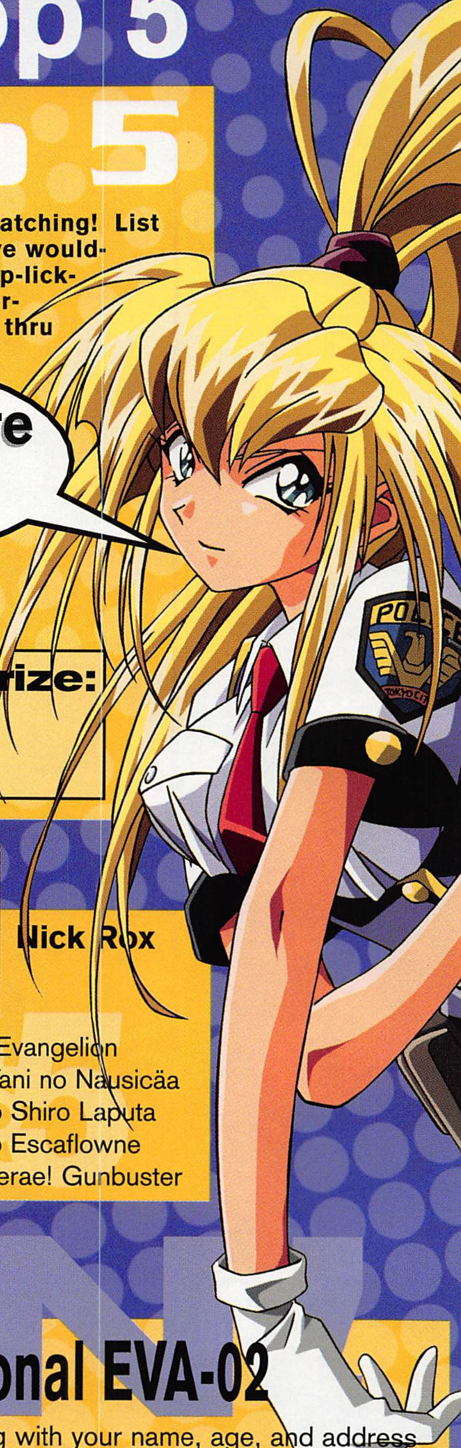
Get lost in a graphic novel or follow your favorite anime through vivid comics unlike any you've ever seen. Check out VIZ Communications Inc. website: www/j-pop.com for more info! The Eva comics are amazing and the Battle Angel saga (my favorite) is without equal. Yeah, I read...

A.D.V. FILMS

AnimeFan Monthly Top 5

Reader's Top 5

That's right anime fans, it's time to speak up and let us know what you're watching! List your top 5 favorite anime and send it in, attention Anime Fan! As always, we wouldn't dream of asking you to go to all the trouble of writing, mailing and stamp-licking for nothing: We'll enter you in our bi-monthly drawing (one entry per person, per month) for the 20-inch Eva model pictured below and Evangelion 1 thru 6!! Two additional prizes will be given away each month. 1st prize - a full set of Burn Up W and a Burn Up W T-shirt and 2nd prize - a full set of Devil Hunter Yohko courtesy of AD Vision!



And the winners are...

Grand Prize:	First Prize:	Second Prize:
John Neish	**Laurence Horner**	**Linda Kirk**
Boulder, CO	Redding, CA	Cleveland, OH



E Storm

1 Evangelion
2 Venus Wars
3 Peacock King
4 Saber Marionette J
5 Burn Up W



Shidoshi

1 Tenchi Muyo!
2 Neon Genesis Evangelion
3 Kiki's Delivery Service
4 Graveyard of the Fireflies
5 Koy: The Metal Idol



Nick Rox

1 Shinseiki Evangelion
2 Kaze no Tani no Nausicäa
3 Tenkuu no Shiro Laputa
4 Tenkuu no Escaflowne
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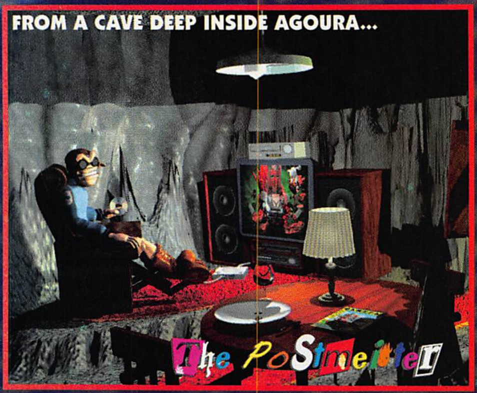
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Dear Posty,

You and the staff do a great job on the magazine; it is the best on the market. Now I'd like to say that I'm another RPG lover who is saddened... sickened... by the failure of the game companies to translate and ship most of the great looking [RPGs] to the U.S.. Aside from the occasional football game, all I play are RPGs and the fact that maybe only 1/4 of the role-playing games make it overseas, is disturbing. I tried a few import games, but had my fun ruined because I cannot read Japanese.

I honestly don't expect all RPGs to be translated, however some that I have seen articles on would sell well over here. I know the companies might lose money converting all of the RPG titles, for export, but *Dragonquest VI*, *Secret of Mana III*, and *Star Ocean*, among others, are certain for success.

I personally guarantee I would purchase any decent RPG, that is released, at the local game shop, and many people I know feel the same way. My friends and I would like to express our thoughts to the companies, but we aren't sure how... especially groups like Enix, that only operate in Japan. My request is, could you print the mailing and e-mail addresses of companies who could make the decision to bring past and future RPGs, to the U.S.

Jeff Borland
Birmingham, Alabama

Dear Jeff,

I feel the same way you do. The fact that Japanese companies, and their American counterparts, feel that the RPG market, over here, isn't big enough to justify RPG releases, is downright ludicrous. I can remember how furious I became when I learned that Devil Summoner wouldn't be hitting the U.S. shores, as well as a plethora of other titles. I don't know how much your personal guarantee is worth, but you and your buddies should definitely voice your opinions to these companies. While I'm not going to print a list of all of the offending parties' addresses, I will tell you that some of the problem lies with Sega, Sony and Nintendo. Scribble your cravings down and send them to the guys in charge, making sure you politely and concisely air your grievances, and try sending in petitions (ya know what happened with the FFVII petition!). Failing that, try voodoo.

Dear Postmeister,

Your mag is pretty cool, but there's one problem: You have BAD taste in games, at times. For in stance:

Tail Of the Sun. Just about the most idiotic game I have ever played, in my entire twelve years. I enjoyed *PacMan*, for the NES, more than this horribly crappy game! Who would want to be a stupid little caveman, running around and falling asleep, every five seconds!

Bubsy 3D. If you thought Atari 2600 had bad graphics, then you were in for a surprise! This game (for the PS!!) looks like the SNES F-X chip! How could you give such a game a good rating? Also, the control feels like somebody poured a whole jar of syrup all over the controller! Not to add to the list, but THE MUSIC!! I can't even comment on that one!

Thanks for your time,
Justin Miller

Dear Justin,

Hey man, don't hold anything back! As far as taste is concerned, it's a purely subjective concept. Remember, there are those out there that think black mesh t-shirts and Camaros are cool. As far as Tail Of the Sun *is concerned, I (along with a lot of other people) happened to love the game. I think your admission to being 12 speaks more loudly about your distaste for that game, than anything else. I was going to follow that jab up with a comment about maybe you are better suited to playing something less high concept, like* PacMan, *but you managed to dog that game, also.*

Now, as far as Bubsy 3D *is concerned, well... that's a whole different story. I think peyote had more to do with that review than anything else...*

I want to finish my response to your letter by addressing your gross overuse of the exclamation point. Let it go, man. There are plenty of other bits of punctuation which are just as effective.

Dear Postmeister,

I love *FFVII* just as much as you all do, but I felt just a bit cut short, at the end of the game. In order to remedy this, I developed a possible addition to the ending. I have a feeling SquareSoft wanted to leave a lot of loose ends, but here's my ending, submitted for your approval:

After the bright light and the evil meteor goes away, everyone is on the Highwind and decides to head their separate ways. Yuffie appears in Wutai, where her father greets her and tells her how proud he is. Everyone is happy and they walk off to the Paradise Turtle, where a "Welcome Back" party awaits.

Red 13 goes back to Cosmo Canyon, where the whole town is rejoicing. His friends tell him he saved the world and, as they are talking around the eternal fire, a distant howl is heard, in the background. It is his dead father howling, in pride, for his son.

Cid goes back to Rocket Town and the former Shinra soldiers hold a formation (like in *Star Wars*, for Darth Vader) for him and salute. Then he goes to Shera and stumbles about, finally asking her to marry him.

Next, Cait Sith asks Vincent what he is going to do, now, and Vincent gets depressed because he doesn't know. Cait Sith tells he wants to try to rebuild the world, after the disaster, by forming a new happy type government, that will take care of the people and manage the materia, wisely. Vincent is excited and tells Cait Sith he will join him, as a partner, in this endeavor.

Barret hurries to Kalm, where he finds his little girl. They are both really happy. He talks to Aries' mother and tells her how brave Aries was. Aries' mother then asks to stay on with Barret and be his little girl's nanny. He agrees.

Finally, Cloud and Tiffa are the only ones left. She tells him that she will probably go find some bartending job, somewhere, and he says, ya. She starts to turn away when he stops her and says "Wait, I... (all kinds of romantic stuttering)... Tiffa, will you..." The screen goes blank and joyous music begins. An envelope appears, which says "You are cordially invited". It opens, and the letter inside reads "...to attend the combined wedding of Cloud Strife to Tiffa Lockheart and Cid Highwind to Shera". Then the screen blanks again and wedding music starts up. A picture fades into sight. It is a huge church, filled with people and flowers, with two couples, at the front. Everyone is there, and it looks happy. Obscure characters, like the Chocobo Sage and the guy from Port Condor, are even present. Then the picture pans across a close-up of the main characters, in tuxedos (or whatever) and they are all happy. It gets to the end of the church and shows two seats empty, with reserved signs on them. One says Aries; the other, Zack. Tiffa walks up and places a rose on Zack's chair, while Cloud places one on Aries' chair. Then they smile to each other and join Cid and Shera at the front, where they stand before the preacher; Dio, the owner of the Gold Saucer. Then a kid runs up and says "smile" and takes a photo of the two couples, with all the others standing them. The picture freezes and falls into the background while joyous music starts up and the credits roll. What do you think?

Cadet Jeremy Finn
USMA at West Point, NY

Dear Private Pyle,

I think when your cadet buddies read that, you're gonna get a blanket party. I also think you made Shidoshi cry. Do you have any idea how hard it is to get him to stop, once he gets started?

GAMEFAN UP TO THE MINUTE

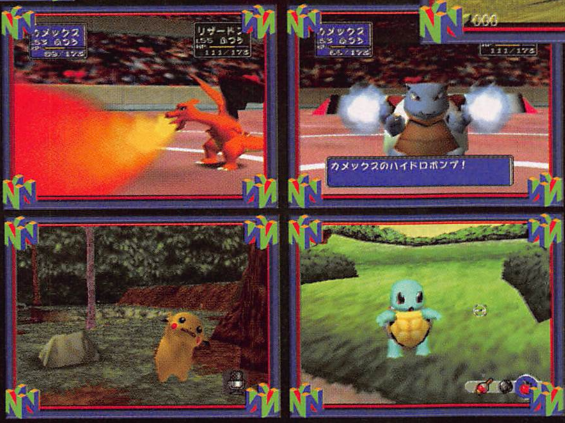


Quite literally nanoseconds before the good ship GameFan sailed to das total printers, the good folks over at Nintendo deluged us with new N64 screenshots from their Space World '97 show. Let's check out the jaw-droppingly smart shots...





(Above, top) F-ZERO 64 - Keeping that frame-rate a chuggin' at 60 fps means two things - a lil bit of fog but a wild ride!
(Above) MARIO RPG 2 It's-a-mee, a-2D Mario, innit? Oh yeah, baby, BRING IT ON!! Superbly rendered backdrops and another shockingly deep quest awaits the Italian stallion. Also, the first 64-bit title to feature 2D plumbers.



(Above) POCKET MONSTER - Move over Tamagotch, now you can create your full-color 64-bit monster to battle! And no poop!

(Above) ZELDA: THE OCARINA OF TIME - Laughingly abbreviated as Zelda TOOT, we soiled ourselves in gibbering wonder... check out that town! Look at the majestic quality of that horse and horizon. Ignore that pixelly curtain! We can't wait!



(Above) MARIO PAINT 64 - Quite why Mike Wakamatsu (above right) is in this painting title is anyone's guess, but texturing beasts and building polygons sure looks cool!





(Left) MOTHER 3 - This every bit as exciting (but not quite as graphically intense) as Zelda. Meanwhile, a real-time Banjo lives up to his name... Banjo will be to Mario 64 what Diddy Kong Racing was to Mario Kart 64...

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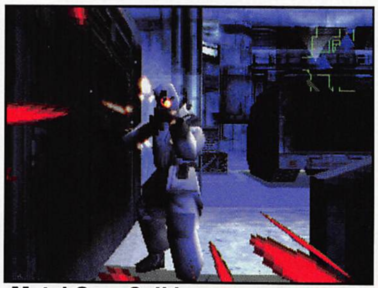
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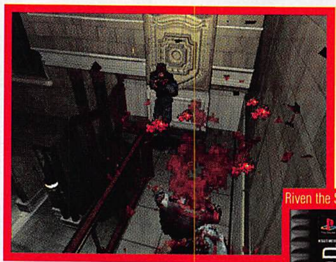
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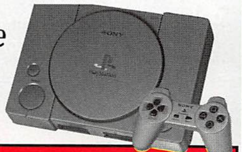


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G
GAME CAVE



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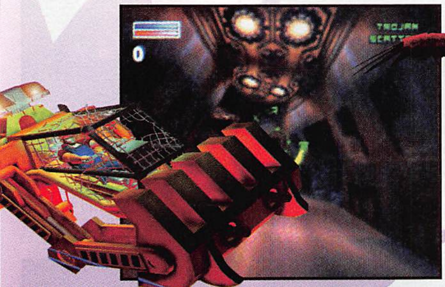


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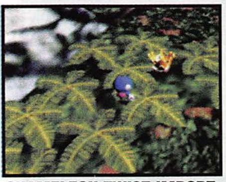
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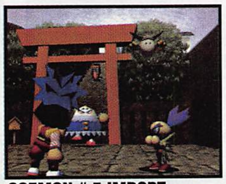
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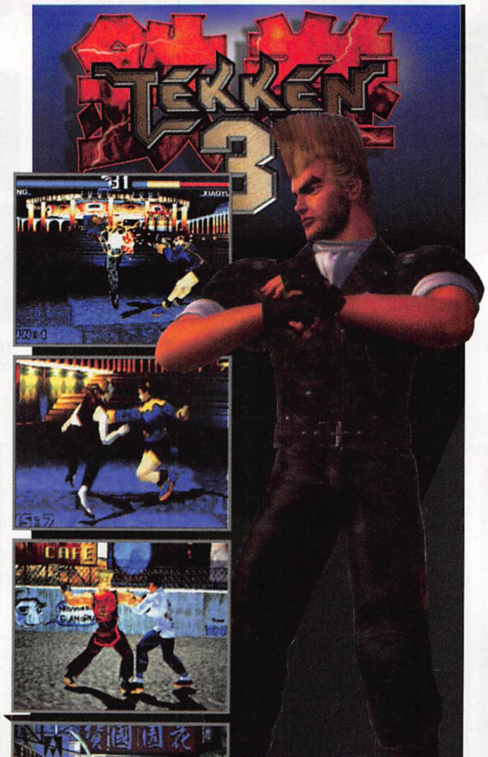
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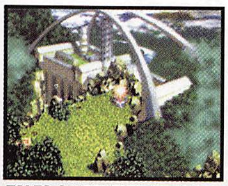
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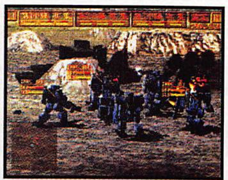
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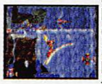
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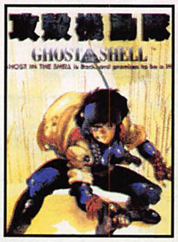
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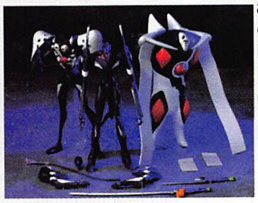






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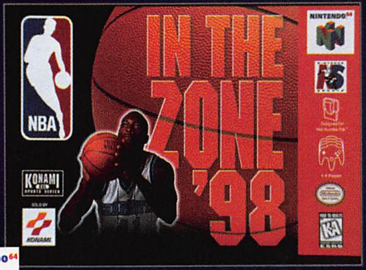
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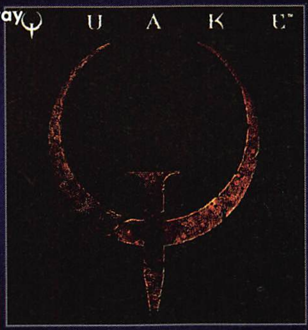
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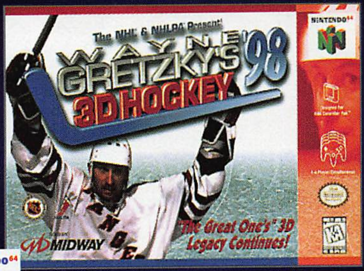
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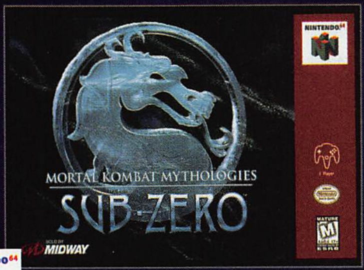
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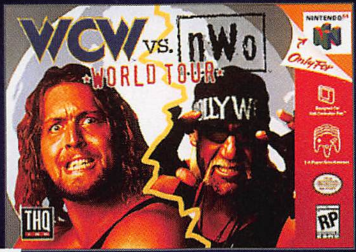
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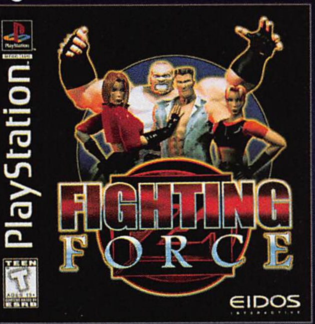
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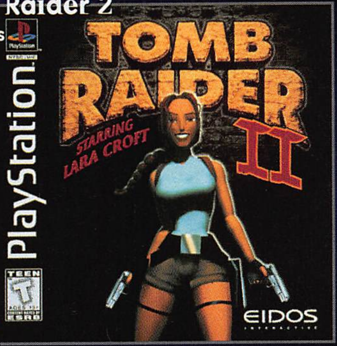
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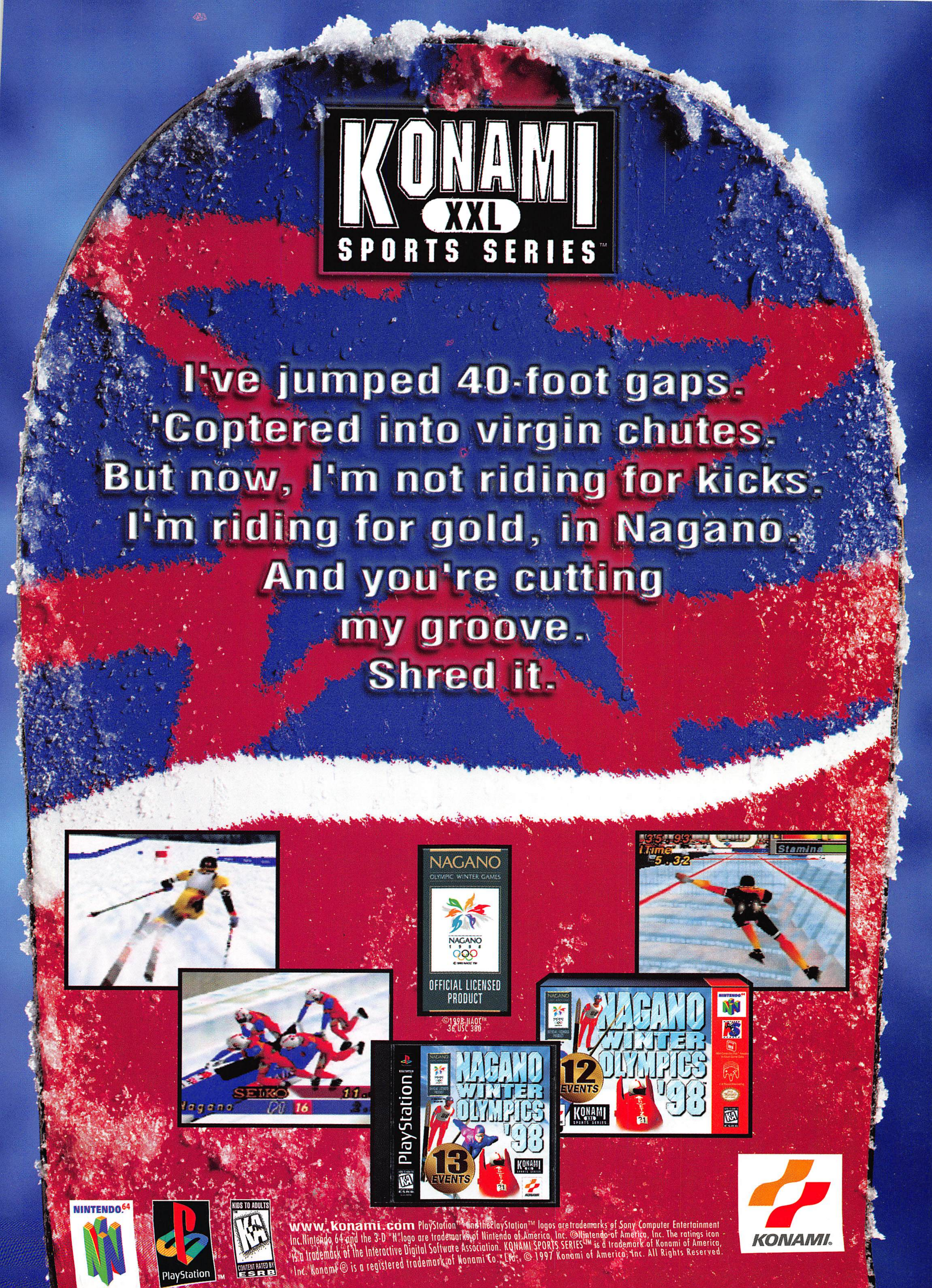
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